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## Q&A Call #6 Transcript

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Okay. All right. Hi everybody. Welcome back to the old SBSM Q&A. We've got Jen Greer in the chat today, posting links and such, and answering questions as she can. Tons of questions came in. Just another reminder to folks, if you do write in anonymously, please remember to include your email address. We don't need to know your name, but lots of times we're getting, now 50, 60 questions and I'm responding to at least half of those via email because I can't do them all on the call. Please always include your email address. All right, so today, one big broad theme is freeze. Lots of questions about freeze and different ways that it shows up in different people and what happens as we move in and out of it. To start, one of the things to talk about is the physical manifestations of freeze.

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When we are in freeze, that can show up in many ways. It can show up physically, it can show up behaviorally. Some of the physical things that we may notice is that we may feel lethargic, have a lack of energy. We may feel sluggish or heavy, or contrary, floaty or dissociated, disconnected. We may have a sense of feeling unreal. We're not really here. Those are all elements that can happen in the psyche and the body as a result of the freeze response. Also, our limbs may be cold. This is because the freeze response draws the blood to the core because it's trying to protect the organs, the vital organs. It also numbs out the limbs, which are the things that would normally get gnawed on first by a predator. All of these are evolutionary responses that have developed over time, these lovely survival responses of ours.

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And of course, those are great if we're getting attacked by a lion, but not so great if we're just

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going about our day. That's how we can show up in our body with this lack of energy, feeling cold, feeling sluggish, feeling dissociated, all of these things. Now, when freeze starts to lift, there can be a variety of things that occur. Very common to feel cold, to feel physically cold, where before there may have been, maybe a sense of numbness or maybe you feel like you can't get warm. That's part of being in freeze. But then as the freeze starts to lift, you might really feel chilled, cold shivers running up the back, teeth chattering, physically just can't get warm. It's a really good idea if that's happening to get your feet in some hot water or just your whole body into a nice warm bath can be really nice.

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Just know that's very common to get that. Also, on the heels of freeze lifting, we have to remember that underneath that lid is always a sympathetic charge, because that is what the freeze is containing, is that big sympathetic charge. On the heels of freeze, we may get a lot of heat. Well, we may get flushed. We may feel really maybe activated, angry. We may get very strong emotions, tears, grief. All of these things that the freeze has been there keeping suppressed start to come up. Now, that may also include physical things like headaches or the limbs feeling strange because remember, the blood is now going to start returning to the extremities and to the brain. This can sometimes result in a headache or there may be strong emotion, which also could cause a little, someone referenced coming out of freeze with lots of intense crying and their head hurting, and the crying, the emotion, well, that's the activation underneath.

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And the headache could be because of the intensity of the emotion, or it could just be because there's blood coming back into the brain in a different way. And sometimes that can cause a headache, even though it's a good thing. It also can be that we feel as freeze is lifting cold, then hot, then cold. We may feel flu-like in the way that you can feel shivery, but then you're hot, but then you're cold in that flu way. It can also feel like that. Very normal, all of that, everything

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I just talked about, very normal. And then the other things are, okay, what are behavioral manifestations of freeze? Now, these were a few questions about this. People talked about having trouble putting themselves out there, having trouble publicly, being on an Instagram live or something like that.

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Or in a group of people not wanting to engage socially, either maybe publicly or even privately one-on-one, not wanting to engage in relationships, procrastination, chronic procrastination, inability to make decisions, lack of interest in engaging with things that maybe used to be stimulating and pleasurable, like reading or watching a show or someone you used to hang out with and you just don't have interest. You don't get any pleasure from that. Lack of interest in relationships in general. All of these things are in the behavioral, relational manifestation of freeze, of being in that kind of shut down place where we don't really want to engage, we don't want to put ourselves out there. There's a question about, well, what to do with that if we're still feeling that, if we're still feeling dominated by freeze. Generally speaking, it's not the best idea to try to address those behavioral things at the behavioral level.

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Meaning you don't need to force yourself to go meet people. That's not going to necessarily solve it. Perhaps, maybe if you push against your comfort zone a little bit, it'll spark up some of the sympathetic energy. Maybe, but generally speaking, we want to work physiologically instead of thinking about, we have to address all these mental, behavioral, emotional, whatever they are. We want to work physiologically. Say, for example, to use one of the questions as an example, I want to do an Instagram live, but I feel really shy. I don't want to do it. I don't want to get on there. Well, what might it be like to really engage your sympathetic nervous system? Jump up and down, do some jumping jacks, do some squats, get the blood moving, get the breath moving through the body. How might you feel about putting yourself out there after that?

(07:19)

Or engage the ventral vagal system. Do some nice long voo's as we are just getting now into in our latest lab. The voo is a very nice way of sending a tone of vibration through the ventral vagal system. It enervates that system, makes it wake up a bit. Engaging, listening to music, singing or chanting in general, playing a drum, getting some vibration moving can be very helpful for that ventral vagal system. Doing these physiological things, maybe there's some aggression there that you find as you start getting the blood moving. Working physiologically, instead of thinking that you have to address the behavioral things at the behavioral level is what we suggest. And just doing the work in general over time, just keep doing it. The more you apply yourself consistently, the closer you'll get to that freeze just lifting. And what is very cool is that as our physiological state changes over time, a lot of these behavioral or mental emotional things really do start to change all on their own.

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They just drop away and we realize, actually, I feel fine. And that can be weird because I'm used to feeling not fine here. This is a situation where I should feel uncomfortable and I don't. And that can be disorienting. There can be this period where we realize we feel okay, and then we're like, oh, shit. I'm not used to feeling okay. And that can feel scary. Just know that all of that is totally common. We're changing our physiological state in the world, and oftentimes what's new, even if it's better, is then unfamiliar and we can retreat back from it a little bit. Just be aware of that. Let me see if I had any other notes on that section. Nope, that's pretty much it. Someone asked if I'm feeling that freeze lifting, if I'm feeling lots of cold and this is new. They said, "I'm up to lab eight. I've suddenly become constantly cold, struggling to stay warm, and which feels familiar from my childhood. Is this freeze coming out of my system?" Yes, yes. Almost certainly, yes.

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If you weren't like that before and now all of a sudden it's hard to get warm, you're feeling

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cold. Yes. This freeze is wanting to lift. Yes, engage the ventral, engage the sympathetic. And they also ask, should I follow an impulse to get warm? Yeah, sure. Put your feet in some water, take a warm bath, do all that stuff. Hold space for the experience also. Really hold space for yourself. I don't have the picture handy, but there was this picture Irene took of me once where I was having this freeze layer lift and I was really, really cold for two, three hours. And so I had my feet in hot water and I had my bathrobe all wrapped around me and I had a big toque on my head and just all hunkered up and wrapped up and cozy with my feet in the water and really making space for myself to move through that. Do that. Someone else asked what freeze might look like in babies and young children? In babies, the most common sign of freeze is the good quiet baby.

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If a baby is just, oh, they never make a sound. They're always just so quiet. That is generally going to mean that they're actually shut down. And that happens most commonly from things like leaving kids to cry themselves to sleep, which actually means going into such an extreme sympathetic activation that they go into freeze and pass out. And then that happens over and over. And that little system learns, well, I'm just going to bypass this sympathetic thing and go directly to freeze because no one's coming. And so then they're just a nice quiet baby that never cries and isn't that wonderful? No, they're in freeze. They're in shutdown. That's one of the most common signs. Also, listlessness in general, paleness, not a lot of movement, not a lot of engagement with mama or papa or the world around them. These are all indications that there's some freeze going on there. And then in kids, it's pretty much the same as adults, but it's often more obvious.

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If someone grows up and they're living in functional freeze, by the time they get to adulthood, they've usually figured out how to pack it up pretty cleverly, such that it maybe is not so obvious. In kids, it's the same things, but it'll be more obvious. It may be a very collapsed

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posture, very shy, just won't engage, won't make eye contact, doesn't have the ability to pack it up and muscle through. No engagement, no eye contact, collapsed posture, listless, not energetic. All of these are indications. Not wanting to socialize, not wanting to be with their peers, all of that stuff. Same things as with adults, but just more obvious. That's generally what you want to look for. And then they also asked, can you describe the difference between freeze and shutdown? It's really two words for the same thing. If we look at a spectrum, when it happens in real time in response to a present survival threat that's real.

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What will happen is first the sympathetic comes on and then we realize, oh, I'm screwed. I can't get away, I can't fight. At that moment, the freeze will initiate. In that first moment, that's what is often referred to as shock, where it's frozen. You're frozen, but you're also still sympathetically activated. That's like the moment of the deer in the headlights, that sudden in-breath of breath, shock, can't move, but still activated. Freeze is on. But very quickly on the heels of that generally is the collapse where freeze then goes into what you're referring to as shut down. That's just the collapsed stage of freeze where the body just goes limp. I'm going to die. I just am going to collapse into a puddle and it's over. There is a slight distinction there. But generally speaking, when we're talking about what's sitting in the system, not what's actively happening, we're talking about what's stored, freeze, shut down, same kind of thing.

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I think there was one more thing, yes, a question. "What would be the impact on a young child whose mother frequently went into shutdown for periods of time each day between the ages of two and four? I cuddled my son and had the TV on, but I wasn't really present and I was in a collapse, which I only came out of when my husband came home." In the realm of things that can happen to a human, that's not that terrible for that little one if this is between ages two and four. If this wasn't happening for the first two years, then there's some good solid foundations there. Likely, if anything, what may happen in that situation is probably a tendency

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to equate being collapsed and freezy with coziness because the kids with mom and the kid's nervous system will have been feeling your nervous system state. But at that age, if there's already been some good foundations laid, it's probably not such a huge deal.

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It may have some impact where there could be later in life the kid has a tendency to just want to squirrel away and read and be cozy and not so active. And that feels really safe to them. Which I mean in the realm of things isn't that terrible...? Okay. All right. That's all the freezy stuff. Moving on to individual questions.

“Exploring the pendulating exercise, I realized for me, pleasant is the absence of pain. Maybe numbness and constriction is over coupled with safety. Pain told me that if it were absent, I would be off ignoring and pushing the body until it hurt. On a walk, struck by the beauty of the light on the leaves, I stood wondering where the sensation, the charge of that pleasure was in my body. Watching a deer, I felt joy, but still couldn't find sensation. Is pleasure expansion? How to wake pleasure as an internal resource.” It's already happening. You're already doing it. You're not yet able to connect it specifically to bodily sensations. That's okay. Just stay curious. Just keep on noticing those moments and really see if you can feel.

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What am I feeling? What am I actually feeling? I know that I feel happy or joyful. And this is new for you. It's a big difference between really feeling joy and feeling just the absence of pain. And if we're used to just pleasure being, I'm numb, this is going to be a new thing. This is a learning experience. Stay curious, keep on investigating those moments. And yes, I will say for myself, and of course I'm not going to assume that everyone feels this way, but I have heard many other people describe joy this way as an expansive state, that it feels physically like there's a swelling of sorts often in the heart area. The chest may feel very full in a pleasant way. There can be warmth in the torso. There can be a feeling of tingling in a pleasant way. What I would describe as a bright feeling in the body.

(18:16)

Those are some of the ways that I would describe the feelings of joy and pleasure. Maybe those will be little cues that you can hunt for when you're having those moments.

“It's my third round. I see more and more all the things I do and say to my kids because of my trauma, my reaction to them. But I can't seem to change my way of behaving. The need to say things when I'm angry is so strong and I can see it's hurting them. Any idea is how to stop myself. It seems like I react on autopilot.” Yeah, you are reacting on autopilot. The key for now is two things. Don't try to do something different. Just try to stop what you're doing. Just think about that. Can you pause? That's the only focus in those moments that I would recommend you having.

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Even if it means you say nothing, can you just pause? If your kids are old enough to have this kind of discussion, you could even tell them, Hey, I'm sorry. I'm aware that sometimes I yell and I'm really wanting you to know I'm working on that. The kids need to be a little bit older to have that kind of discussion. Because otherwise, if they're younger, they can end up feeling like now it's their job to try to help. It's very easy to parentify kids if they're too young, but maybe after the age of eight or nine when there's some individuation there, usually individuation starts to happen around the age of seven. As we get into 8, 9, 10, you can maybe start to have these kinds of discussions. If they're younger, not so much that. No matter the age, another really important thing is when you mess up, repair. As soon as possible repair. Say, oh man, I'm so sorry.

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I'm sorry little Johnny, I didn't mean to scream at you. That's just me. I love you. You're fine. I'm really sorry about that. At any age, you can apologize to your kids with touch, with your voice, the tone of your voice. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I love you. Repair as soon as possible. The other thing, in addition to in the moment, what to do in the moment, which is just try to stop and be



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quiet. If you need to take yourself away from the situation, go into the bathroom. Let your sounds out there quietly if you can. You don't want to scare the kids either. And again, I don't know the age of your kids and if they're older, you can have that discussion. When I'm about to yell at you, I'm going to try to take myself away.

(21:04)

And if you hear these strange growling sounds coming from the bathroom, it's okay, that's me processing my anger instead of yelling at you. But the other thing is, it sounds like you really need to do quite a bit of healthy aggression work not around your kids in the context of a therapeutic session. It may be good to get someone on work for this or just by yourself. When you have space to yourself, it's important for you to start tapping that well of anger not in the context of your kids. That's the other really important thing. And we have all the healthy aggression material out now. All the articles, the two training calls, the voo-ah, that haka video. If you haven't watched that yet, definitely watch that. All the healthy aggression tools are there for you to work with. Irene declares that healing is extremely challenged by life within a toxic system or environment.

(22:06)

“Will you speak about this in the context of toxic civilization we all seem to be immersed in and the threat to safety, like climate disruption? These things seem to be elephants in the room. They certainly affect me as the underlying rumble of threat I cannot manage or escape. How do I work within this, within a healing framework?” Believe it or not, we get this exact question every round, because of course, there's things about the world that are pretty toxic and feel dangerous, feel like a real threat to existence, an existential threat. At least they can feel that way. Always, my response is the same. Really, really notice the difference between the world and the earth. The world is the built world, human society, all our problems, our wars, our conflicts, our pollution, the ways in which we behave badly to each other, the toxic institutions.

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Of course, I'm familiar with all of these. Yes, they're real. Of course, that's the world. The earth is very different. The earth is not in trouble. We can't destroy the earth. We can destroy ourselves. I don't know if you are all familiar with George Carlin, but he's got this wonderful bit on that. He's like the earth has been through ice ages and totally carbon monoxide filled skies and the earth is going to be fine. You think a plastic bag's going to hurt the earth? We may be fucked. The earth is fine. Really, it's so important to understand that distinction. The earth is full of beauty and resources, deep connection, wildlife. Yes, there's pollution, but there's also lots of areas that are not polluted. I imagine for all of us, we can find some place, some patch of nature that is lovely. Even in a city, there are parks with nice grass and trees.

(24:18)

Maybe there's concrete all around, but you have this little patch where you can sink your feet into the grass. The answer to this is connect to the earth, try to ignore the world as much as is possible. Turn off the news is another big one, especially while you're in the process of nervous system healing. I know there can be a temptation to want to be informed, but the news is just a certain slice of information that seems to have a bias towards keeping us all afraid. Just my observation. There's lots of things that are happening in the world. If you think about the sum of human interactions, most of them are positive or neutral. And then there's some really horrific things that happen. And that's what you see on the news is all the horrific things. That's probably not the majority of what's happening. The majority of what's happening is actually probably neutral or good. The news is a really activating thing for the nervous system and the mind. I recommend consuming no news. Connect to the news from the earth. What's the grass feel like on your feet? What do the birds say?

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What does the wind feel like on your skin? How does the sun feel? What does the rain feel like? What's the news from the earth? That is my two cents on that. We should probably just

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record that and just pop it in every time we get that question. Totally understandable. Totally understandable. It's just we've got to shift the focus, shift the focus.

“You mentioned homeschooling is better than public school from a nervous system perspective. Can you explain what's wrong with public school and what should be done to homeschool in a healthy way apart from doing the SBSM work as a parent and or teacher?”  
Thank you. Last time I got a question like this, I failed to acknowledge that there are some good public schools and I heard about it. Let me say right off the bat, yes, not all public schools are awful. There are some good ones out there. There's also some charter schools that are good and there's some private schools that are good. Not all schools are bad, just the majority are not great.

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And from a nervous system perspective, it's for these reasons, way too much sitting and not enough movement. That's one of the biggest ones. Kids need to move and they need to be outdoors, so sitting inside hours a day, often under fluorescent lights, which also aren't great, all of that is really bad for the nervous system. Kids should be outside moving in the sunlight, in the rain, in the elements as much as possible. Reading starts way too young in our education system. From a nervous system perspective, we want to wait till around the age of seven before we start reading. Lots of chronic vision problems have happened simply because the eyes aren't ready to start reading yet and we start it too early. We want to wait developmentally for the physiology to get to a point where it's ready to read. And that's around the age six or seven.

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The way schools teach, this is less of a nervous system thing, more of a mind thing, but the mind is certainly part of the nervous system. The schools in general, again, I know there's exceptions, please don't yell at me, but in general, schools teach you to memorize and regurgitate facts. They do not teach you to think creatively or critically. And that is not the best

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for actual learning. And finally, it depends on where you are of course, but generally the curriculum of schools is determined by the state, which is highly influenced by corporate agendas. Maybe the information isn't always going to be that accurate, maybe a little biased. I know for myself, I know things have changed, but for myself, I was taught that Columbus was a nice man that came and made friends with the Indians and isn't it lovely? I had to wait until I was in college and fortunately had an amazing Black history course that was just, ugh, so good.

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It wasn't just about African American history, it was also about native cultures and what happened there. I actually got real learning, but I had to wait until I got to college to get that information. Now, I know that's changed some, but still the curriculum of public schools may not be the best. It may not always be about what's best for the kids. Those are all reasons why schools can be problematic. In terms of what should be done to homeschool in a healthy way, I'm not an expert on that. There's people who are. But from a nervous system perspective, it would involve time outside, lots of time moving the body. The way that the mind absorbs information when it's coupled with physical movement is totally different from the way it absorbs information when we're static and still, so combining education with movement of the body is very important, lots of time outside, all that stuff.

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Less structure, definitely a totally different kind of testing. Not just memorize this and regurgitate it on a piece of paper. No, let's have a discussion about this. What do you feel about this? What are your thoughts? Oh, I think about this. More of debate, critical thinking, conversation, exploring ideas rather than this is right and this is wrong and you got an F on your test. A totally different paradigm I think would be far better.

"I am an entrepreneur and unhappy with my work. There is not much that makes me happy or it only feels good for a short period of time. It's the story of my life. I've done several very

different studies, different jobs, and many different projects as an entrepreneur. I never feel long term joy connected to anything I do.

(30:36)

What can I do to find out what makes me happy and fulfilled and to not get stuck and bored again over and over? And how can I react to feeling stuck when it happens?" Again, this sounds like a freezy thing. I'll answer the second part first, how do I react when feeling stuck when it happens? Again, work physiologically. Move your body, get the blood and the breath going. Don't try to push through and focus on the work. Focus on your body. Change the physiological state and then see how that affects whatever you're feeling stuck with. Work in terms of how to get out of that cycle, well one thing, I don't know if this is relevant or not, but everything you're talking about is as an entrepreneur. Maybe you don't want to be an entrepreneur. It's not for everybody.

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Some people are way happier showing up someplace, putting in a day's work and leaving. When you're an entrepreneur, you are always pretty much working. I know this because I happen to live with one. I was like, there's no separation between home and work. It's all kind of all the time. That's not for everybody. Maybe you don't want to be an entrepreneur. That's something to consider. But I would ask, can you take some of the pressure off by trying to inquire about what makes you happy? Disconnected from income, take the job picture out of it for a moment and just fantasize about what would you do if you didn't have to make money? What makes you happy? Can you start discovering what makes you happy outside of the context of work? All of those are things to consider. What lights you up? Oh, I love that. It may seem like it has nothing to do with a job, but if you identify things that you feel happy about that you like doing, perhaps there's a way that can turn into some kind of job.

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Or perhaps you leave the entrepreneurship thing behind and you just get some job that's easy,

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maybe neutral. It doesn't fulfill you, but it just pays the bills and it's okay. And then you focus on your joy thing outside of work, your creative project. You're writing a book, you're making music, I don't know, whatever it is, you're doing finger paintings. Whatever it is, maybe it doesn't have to be your work. Those are all different thoughts. I think that ultimately there is for most of us, some form of being of service that is in alignment with our true self, our nature, our reason for being here on this planet. I think that ultimately for many of us, we may find eventually this is what I'm supposed to be doing. But that might be a process. It may take time and it's certainly connected to nervous system health and regulation. It can be just tough to even discover what you like while you're still living with unresolved trauma. Also, just keep doing the work to get more regulated and release the trauma because then that may open whole new possibilities that you weren't aware of. I hope that some of that is useful for you.

"Self assaulting shame versus personal responsibility. Example. How can I truly be okay with... I started binge eating because I couldn't handle the feelings toward my parents and not feel, oh my God, I was so pathetic to not be able to simply say what I wanted and I had to resort to chocolate or I have anxiety issues. And while I'm okay with not blaming my parents for never making me feel safe, it leads to feeling I was so stupid to think that they hated me when they loved me, but were not able to give me what I needed."

Distinguishing between these attacking thoughts and feelings and personal responsibility for making yourself better. All of these things you describe, the actions of binge eating or feeling anxiety, feeling like you feel stupid, all of these things, all of it are a cascade that has followed from events and physiological experiences that were not under your control.

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You didn't have a choice. It didn't start with you. Very often these things start early developmentally when there is no choice. You don't have a choice, you don't have beliefs, you don't have thoughts. These patterns get wired in very early a lot of the time. Can you think about the fact that of all your line, because it didn't start with your parents either. It didn't

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start with you, it didn't start with your parents. This is, at this point on this planet, an intergenerational experience that's been handed down often for thousands of years. This chain could stretch back a really long way. Can you orient yourself to the fact that of all those ancestors and people that handed down this trauma to you, you are the one that's showing up and saying, no, enough. I'm changing this because you are. You're here. You're asking questions. You're in this program. You are the one who has decided to break this pattern and to heal yourself. I would really encourage you to orient yourself to that. It didn't start with you, but you are the one who's changing it.

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That hopefully can provide a little bit of that self esteem that is really needed here. Let's see. Also, kids always blame themselves. Always. That's how it is when a kid is experiencing trauma of any kind. This is because like I said, up until the age of seven, there's very little differentiation between me and you. Kids, if there's violence in the home, if there's chronic stress, they will always think it's about them. Maybe unconsciously, maybe consciously, totally normal, but it's not. Just keep remembering that. It didn't start with you. You're the one who's changing it. Keep doing the work. And all of this happened originally because of things that were not under your control.

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“How can we get fear out of our body? Anger seems easy. Hit the pillow, squeeze the towel. But fear, one thing that comes to mind is to run short sprints. But what if my fear is of health issues? I've been dealing with some unexplained bone and joint pain and the idea to run also makes me afraid of injuring myself and ending up with new or worse pain. Just sitting with fear and taming it sometimes works but feels like it is only keeping it under the surface. I would like to move it out of my body.” A couple things. Yes, you're onto something. Running, but you need to run, just do it sitting. Most of you have probably heard by now the story of Peter Levine's first client. But this is what happened is, this is how he developed somatic

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experiencing is, he had this client who had all these anxiety and these health problems and no one could help her.

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And she came to him because people had suggested, Hey there's this guy who does this weird work. He was just starting to explore some of these ideas. And on impulse in the session he said, Nancy, there's a tiger behind you, run. And she just started going. And she did that for about, I think it was 45 minutes. It was a long time. And no more anxiety, gone completely. That was the beginning of somatic experiencing. You can run, but just do it sitting. You won't hurt yourself. Just start with your heels. You don't even need to lift your whole feet. Let the heels run. And then if it feels like you can do it safely, do it with the whole legs. But then to really run, go, let the legs go. Go. And you can even combine that with a visualization. As you're sitting and running, see in your mind, okay, there's a threat, there's this tiger behind me, whatever it is.

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But I'm escaping. Look, I'm escaping. And you see yourself escaping and you see in the distance, oh look, there's the safe place and you keep running and you keep running until you get there and you stop. Run, yes, but you don't have to literally do it, just do it sitting. Another thing, actually, this came from a participant previously in SBSM because I got the same question and she had said, I actually found I didn't want to run. I wanted to get on all fours and crawl around and be low to the ground. Also be open to, it may not be obvious, and this is where listening to your impulses comes in. Maybe you want to hide in a corner and cover yourself with pillows and be all wrapped up. Maybe you want to crawl around on the ground and get underneath something or be creative, listen to what your body wants to do.

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But in terms of discharging that energy, as you say, getting it out of the body, some kind of mobilization will need to happen, most likely. There does come a time with this work where



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these physiological sensations, even intense terror and fear can just vibrate through the body and leave. But it takes a while to get there where you have enough capacity where you truly stay present and you just sit there and you allow it to happen and you've done enough work that your body knows how to just let it move through. But that can take a while. And generally speaking early on, if you try to do that, you'll either get overwhelmed or you'll shut it down because the body's not ready to do that. The other thing you can do with fear is you can flip the script. Remember that fight and flight are the same energy.

(41:47)

If you're feeling fear, if you're feeling terrified, you can visualize what it is you're afraid of and then go into the healthy aggression work, the annihilation work. How would you protect yourself from that thing? Basically instead of running, you see it, you turn to face it. You let yourself grow into a giant, you smash it to the ground, whatever it is. You use these healthy aggression and annihilation work tools to flip the script on the fear and use that charge to defend yourself, is another way to work with it.

“While orienting, I've noticed that I control my breath and gulp. Today, my body shook and I hyperventilated. I noticed a metallic taste in my mouth, tingling in my hands and feet. I wailed and I wanted to scream, but I didn't want to frighten my neighbors. This wasn't a panic attack. I sensed when I needed to stop in order to continue feeling safe. How can I tell if this was just winding myself up or a genuine release of old stress seeking to come out? Have I made things worse by not screaming?” I'll do again, the last part first. No, probably not. And screaming can actually be dangerous depending where you live. There have been situations where someone just fully lets themselves go into a cathartic scream and the neighbors call the cops because they think someone's being murdered. And then you have the stress of that to deal with. And also screaming is hard on the body. Sometimes maybe it's necessary. There are moments where actually, yes, I just need to scream and that's okay. But you can do a lot with sound that doesn't put that strain on the vocal cords. If you do need to scream, a pillow is your friend.

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That's all you need. Just get yourself a big pillow and there you go. You're good to go. All right. "Now how can I tell if this is just winding myself up or a genuine store of old stress seeking to come out?"

(43:56)

Well, so look at what happened first. "Today, my body shook and I hyperventilated." Were you making that happen? Were you shaking your body deliberately and deliberately hyperventilating? If so, then yeah, maybe you were winding yourself up, but it doesn't sound like that. It sounds like that just started to happen. And so if that's the case, that's survival stress coming out. It sounds like a natural thing. That metallic taste was likely adrenaline. Very often you'll get that taste, a bitter metallic taste in the mouth as a sympathetic thing is coming through. That's the adrenaline. It sounds like this is just a genuine stress release. Right on. And the fact that you sense that you needed to stop to continue feeling safe, that's great. You sense the edge of your capacity. Awesome. And you listen to that, so very, very good.

"I have an extensive amount of dental trauma starting at age two. I now have a good dentist and a hygienist, but my mouth still feels like a war zone. And anyone doing work in my mouth feels incredibly violating. I had a cleaning last week and I can still feel the excess tension I'm carrying in my head, neck, and face from that experience. Do you have any suggestions on how I can release the survival stress after dental work or reduce the activation during procedures?"

Yeah, both. I am right with you. I have had tons of dental work. A lot of it was traumatic when I was a kid with just a brutal dentist. This is really common, unfortunately. And what I've found is with releasing that stuff, it's very much about mobilizing the jaw and the face. Again, think about what would a wolf do if you were trying to fix a cavity. Unless it was sedated, it would bite your freaking hand off. What may you need to do with your face and your mouth to express some of that energy? What may have wanted to happen that didn't happen? Maybe the voo-ahh that we've, again, in this lab, that's a great doorway into this kind of stuff.

(46:13)

And you get that jaw mobilizing. Maybe just moving the jaw side to side as well as up and down, mobilizing the cheeks, the forehead, the face, shoulders, neck, all of that stuff. Get it moving, just get it moving. And some rage might come out. You start doing that, you may get some actual, let that out. Let those sounds out. Let all that out. Go watch the haka video if you haven't watched it yet. I think it's on the supplemental resources for lab seven, or it might actually be on the same page as voo-ahh. That haka video is so brilliant. Those expressions, all of those facial expressions so powerful, so good for mobilizing and loosening this stuff up. And for expressing that aggression in a really powerful, healthy way. In terms of what to do in the moment during the procedures, one of the most important things I've found is keeping oriented to the surface underneath you. Really staying connected to the felt sense under your back, under your butt, under your legs.

(47:40)

That's one of the nice things about dental work is that you're in a chair that is fully supportive and there's a lot of contact there to pay attention to. Keep orienting to that foundation. Also, communicate. If you're nervous, tell your dentist you're nervous. Tell the hygienist you're nervous. Tell them about your history. Communication is a great way of building safety for your nervous system and orient visually, keep on. If you find that you're closing your eyes and really going internal, open your eyes. Orient to the room, orient again. Can you feel the felt sense of your support while you're looking around seeing what's happening? All of that is the best way to to mitigate stored fight flight energy during the experience. It's essentially about staying present. And these are the ways that we stay present is through communication orientation to the visual field and to the felt sense of support. How am I doing on time? Oh, great, okay.

(48:48)

“How to become more adept at differentiating between a release versus being triggered?”  
Maybe sometimes it's a bit of both. Yes, being triggered, if you work with it, every trigger is a

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doorway into releasing trauma. Very important thing to remember. Every time you get triggered, what is a trigger? It means that your past is being poked at. You are no longer fully present. You are getting fight, flight, or freeze energy coming up from past events. Every trigger is an opportunity to do some trauma work. Yes, very often it is both.

“It seems easier for me to tell when it's a physical release, whereas emotional releases are sometimes more obscure which leads to another question. Is there an element of patiently waiting it out with this work? What comes to mind for me is Irene's story about the rashes that she endured. Sometimes the work is just to be in the experience. What are your thoughts?”

All great inquiries there. The first thing is, let's talk about being triggered. Usually when we're triggered, it's not the first time this has ever happened. There's a first time for everything, but for most of us at this point, when we get triggered, it's going to feel familiar. We're going to have that same old thought loop where we're arguing, this is what he should have said, or this is what I should have said, and I'm going to do this thing next time. We have a thought loop that's going on, or we have an emotional pattern that repeats always the same. First, I'm angry and then I feel really sad, and then I feel lonely, whatever it is. There will be a mental, emotional or behavioral pattern that is familiar and that is how you know you're triggered. It's like, ah, here's that thing again.

(50:35)

Start really noticing when you get triggered, what happens? Get very familiar with that. That is so important. For myself, that's how I got underneath the triggers that I had in doing this thing of living in society and having a wife and being in a relationship and sharing a house and all this stuff. There were years and years where I would get triggered and what I noticed is, oh, okay. Over time, as I deliberately paid attention... And that's the other thing, when you get triggered, go away from what's happening. Remove yourself from the situation. Once you're triggered, no goodness can come from continuing to engage with the person that triggered you. You have to come out of it first. That's the first thing you've got to learn to do. Then you need to recognize

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what's happening. What are you doing? For me, I noticed there was always a familiar thought loop where I'd be arguing and justifying my point internally that was like, oh, yep, I totally recognize that.

(51:38)

Here I am. Take yourself away. Recognize when you get triggered. Examine what happens, get familiar with that territory. Start to understand what it is you do. Then you know when you're triggered. Now, like I said, these can, once you recognize it and stop engaging with the person who triggered with you and take yourself away, you can actually then do some really powerful work because that's an opportunity to get at what happened in the first place.

A release, well, you said that you can tell with physical, it seems obvious, but emotional seems more obscure. Well, emotional releases are physical. Our emotions are physical. There are sensations. They are constellations of sensations that we've applied meaning to. This constellation of sensations means this emotion. I'd say emotions are always physical and the way you can tell you've had a release is you feel different.

(52:41)

There's a change. You have some intensity building and you express some emotion and it comes through and oh, now I feel different. Okay. I feel better. And a way you can really tell is what happens the next time the same circumstance occurs. If there is a good release, then you should be able to handle your trigger a little bit more, a little bit better. It should be a little less charged because you've emptied some of the balls out of that particular pool. That's how you tell. You feel different afterwards and you'll respond differently afterwards to a similar stimuli.

“In training call five, Irene makes a point to grieve over lack of early childhood self-regulation and trauma and move on, grieve it and move on. I am feeling so stuck in the grieving vortex. I would love tips on how to close that chapter and move on from being angry at my parents.”

(53:46)

Right here in your question is a clue as to how to move on. You're talking about being stuck in the grieving vortex, but you also say you're angry at your parents. That, the second thing, angry at my parents is likely the doorway out of the grief vortex. You need to get in touch with that rage. That healthy aggression that is often the energy that's needed to move out of that grief spiral. Also, grief for some reason, seems to be one of the emotions that's the most easy to get stuck in. Maybe it's because of the well of universal transpersonal grief that it can tap into. There's certainly plenty of grief on this planet. One of the things that's really important with grief is to stay connected to the body and not get caught in the thought image emotion loop that seems to happen very easily with grief. I'm feeling sad and I'm thinking about the thing I'm sad about. I'm seeing the image of the thing that I'm sad about, which creates more of the emotion of sadness.

(54:49)

And then I think about it some more and I see the image and I feel it more, and we just spiral down in this endless sadness, grief, spiral. The way out of that is to really stay connected to the body and try to ignore the thoughts. Have your eyes open. If there's tears, just let them stream down your face. But stay orienting to the environment. Feel the physicality of the grief. Let it move through the body. Very often people say grief is associated with tightness in the throat, but that tightness in the throat is actually the body trying to stop the grief. When grief fully flows, it's an expansive experience. It moves up through the torso. It expands through the chest, and it goes into the eyes. All the tears come out. It moves through the head. It's like this tidal wave that comes through the body. Really think about staying loose. Let your throat be soft. Try not to hold your jaw. Think about allowing the wave of grief to flow through the body and try to stay oriented to the physicality of that. And yes, see if you can get in touch with that anger that you also mentioned at the end there.

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“My codependent friend and roomie shares her relationship problems with me. If I engage or share anything personal, it inevitably turns into unqualified mutual therapy. This used to feel like care and bonding to me, but now it disgusts me. I become enmeshed and dysregulated for days or weeks.” Right on. You've noticed that's a good evolution there. You're starting to notice that actually doesn't feel good to you. That's a healthy change. “Months ago, I told her I couldn't discuss her problems anymore and I enjoyed a respite. But with her recent breakup, this pattern has resurfaced. I can't afford to engage like this anymore. What is healthy intimacy?”

(56:55)

First on, well, it sounds like it might be time to move because it doesn't sound like she's able to respect your boundaries. Maybe time to move. Healthy intimacy means closeness, vulnerability, communication, being open, and it means respecting limits and boundaries. They have to come together. Also, healthy intimacy means that each person is coming from a place of their own internal resource. Their cup is full enough that they don't need the water from the other person's cup. Because if we're both coming from a place of need, then that is where you get that enmeshed codependency thing that doesn't really work. And we're just sucking off each other in feeding off each other's unresolved stuff and it doesn't really go anywhere. Each person does need to be resourced and healthy enough that they can approach the relationship with a full enough cup on their own.

(58:05)

And we also need each other. I'm not saying stoic about it, but you need to have your own vibe, your own juju, your own sense of yourself, and not be looking for someone to complete you. That does not lead to goodness. And there needs to be boundaries. There needs to be, I say I don't want to do this. I need you to listen and respect that. Boundaries and respecting limits is a crucial part of making that vulnerability and closeness safe. It sounds like that might not be available. It may be worth trying to talk more to her about this, but maybe that she

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can't. I don't know for sure, but it sounds like this is a situation where you've been working on yourself and changing and maybe they haven't. And so you're evolving in your perception and what you need, and it may be time to change your environment.

(59:13)

“How does use of alcohol, whether moderate or excessive, impact this work? I find that it's easier for me to access my emotions when I drink alcohol, and I don't know why. However, use of alcohol makes me more anxious in general. I feel like while it can be helpful in some ways, it's more damaging than helpful in the long run.” Well, excessive alcohol use is always going to be pretty hard on the system. Moderate alcohol use is fine, in my opinion. I don't drink much. There aren't that many forms of alcohol I like, but I love good scotch, good whiskey, those types of things. And in moderation, totally fine. Not unhealthy at all, but it depends on the person. This is, again, with any substance, how it affects you is going to depend on your history, where you're at, and what you're using it for.

(01:00:10)

That's the thing. If you're using a resource to cope and get through the day, alcohol, that can lead to some problems. If like me, you just really enjoy it and it's a celebratory kind of thing that you love that's totally different. Context really matters and the individual matters. With this work, in terms of doing this work, you really need to be sober for it to integrate. Now, people can open all sorts of internal doors with alcohol or some kind of plant medicine or drugs or whatever. There's psychedelics, there's all sorts of things that may open a doorway in you and release something that's been previously locked up. Like you say, you can feel your emotions more easily when you drink, that's fine. But we need to revisit that doorway that got opened from a sober place afterwards in order for that stuff to integrate.

(01:01:14)

This is one of the biggest problems with the current trend of ayahuasca ceremonies. One, people with a lot of trauma should not be doing that in the first place in most cases because so



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often it is massively overstimulating and opens the door to all their unresolved stuff all at once, and it leads to a lot of overwhelm. Irene just released a video about that. It's becoming more and more talked about. People are realizing, wow, that really screwed me up. But they can be very great as well. I've had really powerful psychedelic experiences that were super helpful. But the thing is, that needs to be followed with sober work. It's like you use the resource to open the doorways and get access to the stuff that's been blocked off, and then that needs to be followed up with good somatic sober work to integrate all that stuff.

(01:02:13)

That's most that I have on that. Oh, in terms of why you feel your emotions more when you drink alcohol? Well, it's just because alcohol removes some of our inhibitions, that's all. And we have internal repressive things that we tend to do unconsciously, and when we drink, those things soften and stuff can well up that is otherwise automatically repressed.

“I live in a place where I have no access to my resources. I know water access and access to nature is the way I get to calm my system down, but it's not possible. Realizing this somehow makes it worse because it makes me feel like I could feel better, but I don't. Any ideas on how to deal with not being able to access your resources?” That's really tough. That sounds really hard. The first thing that comes to mind, of course, is move.

(01:03:12)

Sometimes we have to change our environment. I know obviously that may sound overly simple and if you're coming with this question, it's possible that you have already considered that and realized for whatever reason, oh, I can't move. But I invite you to look at that again. We all have the power to change our lives at pretty much any time. It may involve making sacrifices. It may involve leaving behind people who we don't think we should leave behind. But if we're just miserable, that may be what we need to do. What comes to mind for me is I have a child who's grown now, but when he was young, me and his mom split up at when he

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was about three and they moved back to Wisconsin, and after about a year, I moved there because I really felt like I couldn't accept not being around my son.

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I really wanted to be in his life. I wanted to be a parent. And so I moved there. I lived there for about two years. Unfortunately, I'm a west coast guy and I did not resonate with the Midwest in any way. What happened is that slowly I became miserable. I was really overweight. I was depressed. I was angry. And eventually it got to a point where I realized, you know what? I'm not doing him any good being here because I'm unwell and miserable. As painful as it was, I had to make the choice to return to the west coast and be apart from him. And then I got him in the summers and we had wonderful summers and then eventually I had him through high school, which was great. It all worked out really well, but it involved a really painful choice of realizing, you know what, I got to put my health first, even though I feel so much responsibility and I can't leave him. I can't abandon him.

(01:05:19)

I have to. I don't know if it's that kind of thing that's stopping you from moving, but just consider how useful are you to anyone that you feel like you need to stay around or any situation you feel like you need to stay around if you're not happy, if you're not able to access that which makes you healthy and happy. That's my first thing. Is it possible to move? Now, if for some ever reason that you didn't share that I can't think of where it's just impossible, you can't move. I understand that may be a possibility. Then we've just got to get creative. You mentioned water. could you put a water feature in your apartment or your house where you are, just so you have that sound of trickling water in your environment? Can you really make your baths a luxury experience?

(01:06:10)

Really just soak and do a nice warm bath every day and make it really nice. Light some candles, make it a really nice environment. Showers, feeling the water on your skin. You have to use

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what you have if for some reason you can't move. In terms of nature, well, like I said before, even in the densest city, there's parks. There's always some kind of park, schools, lawns. There's places where you can get your feet on the grass. Use what you can. Get your feet on the grass somewhere. Go hug a tree. There's trees everywhere. If you're living in a city with no trees at all, it is just concrete, I don't know if that exists anywhere. If it does, go back to move because that's just untenable. But pretty much all cities have parks and trees and grass and all that stuff. Just make use of what you can the best that you can.

(01:07:11)

All right, how am I doing? 4:08. I don't know if I will get to the rest of these, so let me just pick a few.

“I had a rather traumatizing pregnancy and birth and early postpartum period. And I am so troubled by the potential effect on my new baby. Although she seems fine, although I don't know what to look for in babies, I know she is sensitive and suspect she's affected deep down. I'm wondering what I could do to help her nervous system to heal or minimize the effects, especially while I'm still a big stress ball. Perhaps you have an idea with some of the program material. Any words of wisdom on this?” First off, in terms of what to look for in babies, I actually already addressed that earlier, so the signs of shut down. If she's just very quiet, sorry, did you say she? Yeah, you said she. If she's just very quiet and listless, doesn't cry, doesn't orient, doesn't make eye contact, then there's likely some shut down there, which is a bit of an issue. But if that's not, if she eats, if she nurses, if she makes eye contact, if she responds to faces, if she responds to engagement, if she cries, then chances are she's okay. In terms of what to do, the biggest thing you can do is work on yourself. There's not a lot that you can do for her. There's some things you can do with babies. Kidney, renal work, touch work works great with babies. Tee touch, there's the little tee touch circling where you do a little full circle and then a half circle and then a full circle and a half circle, full circle and a half circle.

(01:09:13)

You're climbing a ladder with these little circles. That's a really lovely soothing technique. Those are touch work from Kathy Kane's stuff. All of that's great, but if you are really stressed, you're not going to be able to do that in a way that's helpful for her. Do those things maybe if you have moments of relative calm, if you have moments where you're not feeling like a big ball of stress, where you're feeling more like, I'm feeling okay, I'm feeling more mellow, then sure, support her kidneys, just lots of touch, lots of skin on skin contact. Super, super important for babies to have that skin on skin contact. Hopefully you're able to nurse and breastfeed because that's really, really important for the baby's development and for many reasons, eventual vagal development, that's really great if you can do that. But it comes down to you doing your work to get more regulated and calm. You're in the program, just what works for you so far? What have you discovered?

(01:10:18)

I don't really know of a specific thing because I'm not sure what you respond best to, but in general, things like the kidney adrenal lessons, the containment lessons, sometimes for some people, the layers lesson, things that help the voo, all of these lessons are designed to help stimulate that parasympathetic part of your system to calm a little bit. And again, with this trauma work, remember there's always two directions we can go. We can support the parasympathetic or we can go with the activation, which is also a crucial, crucial part, getting that activation out of the system through things like the voo-ahh healthy aggression work. Cultivating the exhale or cultivating the inhale sometimes can do that, depends for different people again. I'm not sure what works for you. But just keep doing the work for yourself to get regulated. If you have access to a touch practitioner that works with babies, then that could be a helpful resource for your kiddo. That's hard to find. But there is a directory. Jen, I don't know if you have the link for that touch directory.

(01:11:35)

If you could pop it in the chat. That is a directory for touch practitioners. Co-regulating touch, thanks. And then you can also check the SE directory, just the main somatic experiencing directory in your area. And you look at practitioners and very often it will say in their bio if they are trained in Kathy Kane's work. Now, not all of them will work with babies, but if you happen to have access to a touch practitioner who works with babies, that could be really supportive as well. Also, final thing, take advantage of whatever support you have. If you've got a good grandma or a mom, a baby's got a grandma, if you've got a partner of some kind, if you've got siblings, if you've got friends, if you can get space for yourself by someone else hanging out with baby for a while who maybe is a little bit more regulated, a little bit more calm, that can have a really big impact. Maybe grandpa is super mellow, and let baby hang out with grandpa for a couple hours while you go and be a big ball of stress and scream and cry and hit things.

(01:12:50)

Whatever you need to do, use your support if you have it, whatever support you have. Thanks, Jen. That's great. There in the chat, that's the co-regulating touch directory, that's Kathy Kane practitioners and the main SE directory where you can search by region.

“Is there a difference between how physical, example, a car accident, versus emotional, relational trauma like abuse is processed, stored, experienced, and released from the nervous system. It seems to me that early emotional trauma impacts how we see ourselves and that these false beliefs create more trauma in adulthood. Is this same with physical trauma? I'd appreciate your insights.” Trauma is when survival energy gets activated and doesn't get released. In that case, it's all the same. Doesn't matter what the context is. Now, in a physical accident, there are some things that are going to be present that may not be present if it was a relational situation. One of the main things is what we call force vectors. This is one of the things we work with in Kathy Kane's work. Also, I think some osteopaths' thick work addresses this, ortho bionomy.

(01:14:06)

Force vectors are when you get big impacts and the force of that gets stuck in the tissues. And so again, you can get touch work to help release those. That's one thing that won't be present in a relational situation. Also in a physical trauma, there may be specific incomplete self-protective responses that need to happen. Ways in which you didn't get to protect yourself from the thing that happened that are wanting to come through the system that are very specific. In relational situations, there may also be incomplete self-protective responses. It could be if someone was coming at you, a person. But there can also be incomplete self-protective responses that are symbolic. That can be about, I just need space.

(01:14:58)

My body wants to push away because I need space. Or it could be I want to reach for mama or papa to pick me up. I want to reach for connection. There can be archetypal symbolic gestures that move through that are also in the procedural camp, but they're less about specific motions that we needed to make. I'd say those are the main differences in terms of those two realms. And then the second question, it seems to me that emotional trauma impacts how we see ourselves. Early developmental trauma really is how I would clarify that. Early developmental trauma greatly forms how we see ourselves, which then yes, can lead to all sorts of false perceptions which create more trauma down the line. Could the same thing happen with a physical trauma? Possibly. I would say not so much usually, but maybe there's a physical accident that leaves someone with a really collapsed posture.

(01:16:03)

And over time that collapsed posture could actually lead to feelings of depression, low self-worth, not good enough, feeling sad a lot. The posture has a huge effect on how we feel inside ourselves. Yes, it's potentially possible that some kind of physical injury or trauma could happen early on, which could lead to some chronic physical thing that could then lead to further issues in the trauma realm.

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“When releasing trapped survival stress results in physical manifestations of pain, rashes, all the things you said we may experience. If we medicate in any way to make these symptoms more bearable because we still need to function at our work or home, et cetera, will this inhibit the release of the energy, close the door, so to speak?” It really depends on what we're talking about. For example, it may not close the door, it may narrow it a bit. It really depends. Say I do a big piece of work and afterwards I've got a pounding headache and I just feel sore.

(01:17:16)

Well, in that case, if I take some Advil or something, no that is not going to make the work I did not count. That's not going to close the door. There's this aftermath and I just want to soothe it a bit because it's intense. In that case, no. However, say there is this rash that appears that really needs to express through the system because the system is detoxing and it needs to come out and we constantly suppress it with cortisone, yes, that can absolutely put it back into the system and stop the release from happening. Now, you asked about release of energy. That's a little different because in the case of a rash that's not, I mean you could say it's a form of energy for sure, but very often it's a detoxification process where the body is releasing heavy metals or chemicals, different toxins from the environment that it's taken in and it's coming out through the skin.

(01:18:19)

We could potentially stop that if we constantly suppress it. And you may need to do that some. It's a dance. Generally speaking, I want to say with all of our symptoms that may appear from this work, we want to just let them be as much as possible and make room for it to complete and go to the other side. We may need additional support for that. We may need to consult a naturopath or a pendulum worker like Irene's worked with. We may need to work with an acupuncturist or Chinese medicine. There may be other elements that support the process and help maybe bring it to conclusion faster or provide a little relief. If you have to, you just got to soothe the thing because you have to function. Do it. Because if you're just in endless

suffering, that's then its own form of trauma. It may be that it's a dance of I've done this as much as I can and now I really got to do something because I've got to work, I've got to function right. Then do that.

All right. All right. I better go. That's 80 minutes. All right. Thank you all so much. There's a few questions I didn't get to. If you feel like it, feel free if I didn't get to your question to again follow up on the Q&A page in the comments section. If you have follow up questions from an answer I did give, also follow up there. Please remember that space is not for new questions, it's only for follow up stuff. Really good to see you all. We have a break week next week, so I'll just encourage you all to rest, integrate. If you feel like doing more of the program work, if you feel like, oh, I want to revisit that, then great. But don't feel any pressure and really take it as an opportunity to rest, integrate, ruminate on what you've been learning. And so there'll be no calls next week. I will see you in a couple weeks. All right. Bye everybody.