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## Training Call #2: Building Capacity + Somatic “First Aid”

Welcome, everyone. Welcome, welcome. We are at training call number two for SmartBody SmartMind. Today the topic is building capacity and somatic first aid, and I'm just going to make sure that's there and good, good, good. And before we get started, I just popped a prompt to all of you here, and that is, what are you learning this week? A theme that I'm seeing is freeze. Someone said, "Wow, functional freeze is real." Someone said, "Wow, frozen." Someone said, "So much freeze." Another one, "Discovering more embodied emotions, becoming embodied." We are in the week where we get into working with the joints, so today or this week I will teach with the wrist, but that can apply to any joint in the body, any part where a bone and a bone come together. So just know, and this is an important thing, especially for those of you new here, the alumni know this really well -- these lessons are meant to be repeated. Yeah?

So the audio lessons, the neurosensory lessons, even the education is meant to be repeated at your leisure, at your impulse, just as if you're learning how to write, like print, you don't do it once. You don't write the alphabet once. How many times do you write that over and over and over again, and then you do a cursive? I don't know if they teach that anymore, but that's how you do it. You have to keep repeating and repeating. So just know that that is important. This continual reconnection, re-attunement to the lessons, we're mimicking in some way what maybe didn't occur when we were really young.

That constant attunement from our caregiver, that constant, "I'm hungry, I better eat. I'm cold, I better warm up. I'm warm, I better cool down. I'm tired. I better rest." "My throat's going a bit funny; I want to have some water. So just know that this is meant to be repeated. And as you repeat more and as you review more layers build, more mastery builds, and that's how more capacity builds and how more regulation builds. Yeah? So that's kind of the formula, if you will. Just a reminder for the zoom, we like to keep or I like to keep the chat as quiet as possible. Mara is here if there needs to be something answered or a resource popped in for whatever reason, but I think everybody knows how to find their handouts.

If you found the call today, you found the handouts, so they're both there. And one thing I want to mention, because this happened last call, I am pretty slow at going through the answers. I repeat them multiple times. So if you're looking at the chat and checking it out,

which many of you are not, but if you are and that's distracting you, it might distract you from hearing what I'm saying. So just know, I know if you have to get up and walk away because you're tending to children or something like that, you might miss a word and that's fine. We'll let you know what you missed, but try to really stay focused. And if you can't stay focused, that's okay. Stop. Turn off the recording, come back and listen... Or the live call, come back and listen to the recording afterwards.

We're also training our muscles to cognitively be able to pay attention in an embodied way. So this is theory, but it's also practicing the art of connecting with human intelligence, which is writing and reading and learning and that kind of thing. So we're also training our brains to be able to focus. So if you're finding that you just can't, then that's a good signal, a good impulse to follow that you might need to take a pause. So that's the other thing is to really let your biology guide you and just like the reading, the writing, learning, with time, you build that muscle to focus and pay attention while staying connected to the body, the environment.

So before we get into this, just take a second to connect to your system and take a second to connect to one thing out of those basic nervous system health practices. It could be orienting, it could be noticing your breath. It could be feeling the chair under you. It could be shifting your body because maybe you feel a little crooked in your seat. It could be taking a sip of something. Noticing if your mind, if the chatter, if there's any survival physiology that you're noticing that's trying to compete with this focused attention of just being here in the moment.

And if you're noticing that survival physiology or the thoughts doing that, just for fun, you could even explain, "Huh, look at that. I can feel X, Y, Z or I can sense that thought that just keeps popping in." So it's not necessarily about always changing, it's about becoming aware and then coming back to these basics. There's the wall, there's my desk, there's the trees, there's the window, there's the plant, they're my feet. Oh, right, I'm breathing. That's one guarantee. Right? That's one guarantee. I know you are all breathing. That's the first certain thing. So remembering to bring this in, to keep bringing this in as we go through the theory, as we go through the practice of learning. So the first piece here, so page one, again, building capacity and somatic first aid. This is just some quick review. Remember last week we really dove in, pun intended, to the swimming pool, the beach ball analogy.

So first line there, the importance of the biology of stress videos. So for some of you, you might be digging those and going through them. And then for some of you, you might find that it's just a bit too much information at the start, and that's fine. But just like this training call and

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just like the audio exercises, how can you titrate? How can you in small little chunks and little bits take in that education? So education is key -- that's the first word there. Education is key. Education is key.

Now the reason why it's key is because our higher brain, which we still don't really understand, let's be very honest, it's so complex, we really don't know. There's still that missing link and where humans came from and it's this powerhouse of technology in here. Because of that, the human wants to make meaning out of things. It wants to understand... What does that toddler do when they can say the W word? Why? Why? Why? That shows us how important it is for us to know why. Why am I tight in my chest? Why do I feel sick to my stomach whenever I walk into this house?

Why can't I fall asleep at night? Or why can't I stay awake? And so the education is so important, and this was really something that I think shifted how I work with clients, and how I see people who come into SmartBody Smart Mind feel kind of a light bulb goes on, because you learn the education and you get knowledged about your system, as opposed to being a passive recipient if you're working with someone else. Now, you don't need to understand every single minute detail of say, my knee surgery that I've had many times. I'm not interested so much in that because that's out of my control. Even if you tried to teach me how to do knee surgery, I wouldn't be able to do it right? But with this, it's a little different. You're learning about what you have in here and it's yours. Your body is really the only thing that is truly yours. Think about that.

And so, how it connects to the environment, how the environment affects your system, is so important to understand. And we rarely teach children this and we rarely teach adults this. We tend to get to know our bodies when what happens? When something goes wrong. We really need to change that. So education is key. Now, in a world where all humans were raised exactly the same with nurture and connection, and we were all given our birthright to be creative little souls of our destinies and authenticity, then we might not need to know this education because we'd be so darn regulated that it wouldn't matter.

Just like the bears in the wild don't need to learn about their nervous system, they just know how to take care of their cubs. They're darn cute, but they're important. They need to teach them how to be a bear in the wild. And so I think we're at a point where we need this education because we're not all being raised by mama bears, right? We're being raised by very

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different kinds of mamas and we're so diverse in how we were raised so we need to understand how our bodies work, in my opinion. Okay.

Next one, continue to create more exit paths. So again, these are these quick points I'm just going over. The important things that we're really focusing on, and I'm really trying to hit home at the beginning of this course is we're trying to create more exit paths and expand space in the nervous system, in the body system. This goes back to, of course, the biology of stress, or sorry, the swimming pool and beach ball analogy. We want more space. We want to take our little tiny swimming pool that's been stuffed with so many balls and expand that pool so those balls have jiggle room to get out, wiggle room to get out, but we also don't want to keep the balls in the pool.

We want to create exit paths, and those exit paths might be when you're stressed, you orient. The stress might not go away until you take a moment to pause. True story, last night I was barbecuing on our deck and I walked inside and there must have been wind because the weight of the door, it hit, it slammed on my hand. I wasn't expecting it because for whatever reason it must have been, I wasn't orienting to a gust of wind. I have no idea. It really hurt. It broke skin. My hand is fine. And even in that moment I teach this stuff, I had to say to myself, "Sit on the couch, Irene, and chill out for a few minutes." Okay? Because the rush was to keep cooking dinner.

So I sat. I waited. I felt the sting. It was bleeding. I didn't worry about going and getting a tissue, I just did what you do. Sucked my knuckle. Tended to the joint. Felt it, started to slowly orient, "Nope, it's not broken, it's just a little sore." And today I even forgot that it was there. I didn't even put a bandaid on it. So there's these little tiny moments that you have control over now. You didn't have control when you were five, when you had a broken arm, when your parent wouldn't take you to the hospital. That sucks, those sorts of things.

But now it's like you can control this, you can bring in that mind and say, "I need to pause and feel this." That is creating an exit path. That's creating space because you're not putting another ball in there. If I had kept cooking, I might've not felt my finger so much and I would have maybe done something else while preparing food and then I would've gotten worse. So little ways that we can make these paths open more and create bigger space in the pool. So again, I'll go through these bullet points. We want to grow the pool. That's the word, the pool. Grow the pool, the body capacity.

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In this example, just by noticing and letting those stinging painful sensations come through and not shaming myself for it -- it doesn't matter, it's fine. That keeps the capacity big. It also takes out the ball, so that's the next line down. Takes out the balls. So don't let the acute stress stick. So this was an acute stress. It was in the moment. Take out the balls, don't let the acute stress stick and release old stored procedural memories. This is going to be new information for some of you. Release old stored procedural memories. Procedure is just a fancy way of saying the procedures that are stuck in the body. So one of the more classic examples that I would give for a procedural memory that stuck in the body is, let's say when you were a young kid, you had physical abuse happen to you and you wanted to smack your mom back, but you couldn't because you knew that that would make it worse. So the procedure of wanting to hit back is stuck in your nervous system.

Now, if I were to just hypothesize, let's say, and I was lucky I was not hit by my parents, but let's say I was. Let's say that door slams on my hand like it did last night. That could trigger a response to hit that door and swear at that door and hurt it and break it. Why do you think all these movies show people punching their hands through walls, right? It's a procedural memory and so that wouldn't make sense. It's like, "Oh, you just slammed. It's not a big deal. The door didn't hurt you." But it could trigger that hurt. How many kids got slapped on their hands in elementary school with rulers? My parents' generation, right?

That could instigate a trigger. So this is the other thing. When little tiny things happen to you around the house and it seems not really big, and you have this huge emotional reaction, that could be a moment where your system is remembering an old traumatic memory, and then that's your ticket to, "I better feel this and let this rage come out. I'm not going to hurt the door. I'm not going to hurt myself more by punching the glass. I'm just going to feel that roar and maybe move my arms in a way that allows some of that energy out." And we'll get into more of that when you get into the biology of stress video number five. Number five.

All right. Next, lying down. It's not important. It's not, not is the word. It is not important to process every single, that's two words -- every single, hyphenate it -- every-single event. It would be impossible. But let's just use that hypothetical example. Let's say you were someone who was subjected to physical violence through your whole childhood, really working with that door that slammed on your hand and processing it and screaming and grieving and crying, and then reorienting. That can process lots of balls from your childhood in that one moment. But the key is that you pay attention. So think about this, if you don't have the education about



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this, you might just hate the door. It makes no sense. And not understand why there's such a big trigger.

When you understand this, you understand violence in a much better way and why people do really bad things. So you don't need to process every single event. It can sometimes do one thing like this that opens up the swimming pool exits to allow old balls to come out through the processing of an acute event. This is what I think is unique about this work. We're not trying to shake out a response because you know you were physically abused. It might not match. Sometimes it takes something like this to trigger, to activate that rage, that hurt, that that wasn't fair, that kind of stuff.

Next line down, biological embodiment. At the start of the call today, I asked, what are some of you learning? And some of you said being more embodied. Yeah? So biological embodiment, learning how to listen, learning how to listen to the body's signals. Listen is the word. And the more you listen to the signals, the more you're listening to the signals and the better you listen to, I need to take a drink of water, I'm not hungry, I need to go to the bathroom. I'm hot, I'm cold.

All the things, the biological impulses, that teaches you to be able to listen to this example of slamming your hand in the door, getting your hand stuck in the door. It allows you to be better at discerning, "What do I need to do right now?" For me, I just had to sit and feel the pain because that's all that was there. But for some, there might be frustration, shame, collapse, talk. "I'm so stupid." That's where that toxic shame comes in. "How could I do that? I'm such an idiot," right? Attach that.

It might be that there isn't a need to scream or pretend that you're going to hit the door. Maybe there's a deep sense of grief that connects to the feeling of the grief and the sadness from sad events that occurred, let's say, when you were young, right? It isn't always going to be about hitting and getting anger out. It could be anything. It could be anything. It could even be an exclamation of, "Holy cow! Because I'm understanding this. I just got really reactive to that door. This doesn't make sense. This must be something else."

So, you could also have an intellectual conversation with yourself that makes meaning out of why you're having such a strange reaction to the door slamming on your hand. Again, it isn't just one thing. It's this whole conglomeration of potentials that could lead you to how to process that. I can't tell you what to do. You have to feel it and sense it, and that is why, very

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important, that is why learning how to follow your biological impulses when you're not in a stressed state is very important. It teaches you.

Okay. How to practice somatic first aid. What I mean by first aid, obviously when we hear the word first aid, we think of first responders, right? CPR, ER, wrapping up wounds with bandages and splints and all that, burns. So, first aid in this case isn't that. It's working with and feeling our nervous system and sensing what our body needs, how to reconnect to the here and now. What are four things? If you were to write down, and I'll say them as well, four things you can do when a minor, not life harming... So, a life harming event or stress takes place.

The reason I'm singling out life harming is there's a time when this is not true. If you have really been in a serious accident and you need in a moment to have immediate care and attention or your child does, you are not going to tell them to sit there and feel what they're feeling and orient. If there is a compound fracture, which is when the break is open or something, you're going to scoop them up and take them to the hospital. You worry about this stuff later, but let's just say not life harming, like me slamming my hand in the door.

Orient. That's one. And these are in no order of importance. Orient. Connect to the ground or sense the ground under you, whatever it might be. Notice breath. Notice your breath. And I say notice, not, "Take a deep breath." This is so different from so many things out there. When you're stressed, people will say, "Take a deep breath." Well, maybe the breath has to be held in that moment because the pain is so intense, the system has to process that insult to the body.

Again, it's listening to what the body is needing. Sometimes there might be a little hyperventilation, right? Well, panic, that sympathetic. You want to let that occur because if you try to force the breath into... And I'll see if I can act this out, that... When people are really, really scared and the breath is erratic. You need to let that move through because if you try to stop it, that lung tissue, the airways, they are also going to have a procedural memory. They want to do that.

And so you don't want to stop it, but maybe when that is happening, you sense and feel the ground so you don't disconnect and dissociate. All these blend together. And then follow the impulse, however that might be. And then that would be, "Oh, I'm feeling the impulse to feel this breath that's like this and I feel like I need to stand up and move. It doesn't feel right to try to sit still." For example, one example, right?

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All right. We do these things naturally in many ways. If you're feeling a little lightheaded because you've had a big threat, typically the impulse is to what? Sit down, bend over your legs. It allows the body to not have to work so hard to get blood to the brain. We do these things naturally. Our physiology will give us a good smack. It's like, "Hey, you need to sit down. You've got to let this blood pressure come down and to do that, you have to sit."

Okay. There's so many things. Any others, that's just what can you do? Resourcing. That was the first lesson from our course, from lab one, resourcing. This is a friendly face, thinking about something. This is where very often at first responders scenes, they will give someone a blanket, one of those heavy gray blankets to contain the person. It doesn't necessarily mean that they're cold. It's a resource.

This is where a good bedside manner is really great with first responders and doctors. The nicer they are, the more interested. They're not freaking out. They're talking to you straight in the eye. "What's your name? My name is this." That's not because they necessarily want to know your name. That's their training to help you feel safe. It puts you into that ventral vagal. They would work on you regardless, whether they knew your name or not. It's that connection that can help us come down and out of that survival response.

Two, if you can't process the somatic experience, so those are the two words there. If you can't process the somatic experience in the moment, make a conscious note. Make a conscious note, or write it down to do so when you have time and space. In many ways, everything we're doing right now, for many of us, we're processing stuff now so that we can work on stuff that we never did in the past. That means that if you don't have time, because let's say you slammed your hand in the door to... Let's just keep using the example, and let's say you have a child who's just fell and is screaming. You're going to want to go to them and not sit on the couch for 10 minutes and ignore them.

So, you have to be reasonable here, but you make note, "Okay, I couldn't handle that. I got to go help my kid. Once all that is settled, I'm going to sit and I'm going to feel that part of my body. I'm going to sense what occurred." The ouch, the shock. You can still work on this stuff afterwards. Of course, if you can in the moment, that's always great.

All right, page two. Page two. Yeah, someone just popped into the chat. You were reading my mind. I thought of this and I didn't share it. In one of his books, I think it's in *An Unspoken Voice*, Peter Levine talks about how he was hit by a car crossing the street near his home in



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Encinitas in California, and there was a woman walking by or nearby, and she stayed with him while the first responders came. He says in the book, he's pretty certain, even with all of his training, that if she hadn't been there, he probably would've had PTSD from that accident because he was alone.

So, we're not immune to this. Even when we understand, we do need to do these things and have that support. He's speculating, maybe he wouldn't have. Who knows, right? Who knows? All right, page two. This is following from how to practice somatic first aid. We're still working through this first piece here. There's some examples on page two. Page two, for example, this is all going to be review. We'll do it anyway. Do some health basics. Health basics, nervous system, health basics.

Again, that's code for orient. Notice the breath, notice the ground. Follow your impulse. You can either do these organically, just in the moment, or you use the neurosensory exercises. If you're having trouble finding them in your own mind and guiding yourself, then pop in... I say that like you have a cassette tape. Push play on your computer and listen to one of the lessons. Listen to an orienting lesson. Listen to the follow your impulse lesson. Listen to any of the lessons.

Many of them start similarly, right? Notice what you're feeling. Come to the ground, da, da, da, da. Sometimes it doesn't even matter what the lesson is. Just having that voice to guide you can be useful. Obviously, my voice is familiar to you and so that can give that resource of, "Oh, yeah. I can settle. This is code for chill out, sense the ground." And that might in itself bring you into those basics organically.

Next line down, seek out some support and social engagement. Seek out some support and social engagement. So again, this sort of follows into what we were saying about Peter Levine and that car accident that he writes about in his book in *An Unspoken Voice*. Again, he didn't seek it out, it came to him. But this is where again, if our history is to stay alone, that classic, "No one is here to help. I'm all alone. I gotta do it all myself." Training yourself to be okay asking for help is a big one.

That was my kryptonite, asking for help because I did it all, right? Did it all. I could run an animal hospital by the time I was 12 years old. I could do small surgeries, do the cash-out, wash the floors. I could develop, I could answer the phones, have people on hold and clean the room for my dad when he was seeing pets. No word of a lie. That teaches someone to know how to

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do everything. If you were that person who had to do a lot when you were growing up, maybe you were the older sibling. I see this a lot when there's been big families and the older sibling is often the parent, ask for help.

How can you ask for help? Even asking for help when you're looking for something in a grocery store is a step. Just ask. Usually, they're happy to help because they're bored doing their job. So, find out how can you engage with people? It doesn't have to be with family, it could be with passersby. And you can even do this in a way that is a little contrived. You go to the coffee shop and you want to practice a little social engagement. Maybe you're not going to get something in the display where all the pastries are. Ask about them. "Hey, what is that?"

I know this sounds strange, but this is a way that you can practice connecting, asking questions. And often the people are keen to help, right? Keen to help. That's one way to practice social engagement and getting that parasympathetic, ventral vagal stronger.

Next line down. Connect with nature, literal or in visualization. Obviously, when we can get outside, the more, the better. This has been something I've been learning a lot more about the last couple years. The importance of fresh air, sunlight, touching trees, getting our feet into the grass, the dirt, sand, even gravel can ground us, right? That's rock, concrete. Getting into that nature can help us come down a little bit.

So can visualization, right? If we were to take a moment, and if you were to imagine your favorite space outside, whether that's a river, an ocean, trees, moss, skiing, swimming, skipping rocks on a lake, whatever it might be, it's pretty possible that you're able to sense that in your physiology, what that's like. And that's because we have memory. Our ability to remember our traumas and our ability to remember good things. They live in the same world of our memory.

Make use of resources, next one down. I've already sort of said this. Resources is the word, music, movement, spiritual practice, anything that grounds you. For many people, their spiritual practice is nature. As humans of earth, I think it's an important thing to be connected to the earth and the nature of it, because it feeds us and it gives us what we need, so it's a very important one. And it's biological, just as we are.

All right, page two still, the four whens. These are interesting ones. These are interesting ones because they're not always going to hold true. I put my disclaimer here and I remind you, and I tell you a story of being in university where in first year, I wish I could remember, I think it was biochemistry. The professor said, "We're going to teach you stuff in year one and you're going

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to believe that it's true. And then when we get to year four, you're going to see that everything we've taught you is kind of true, but then there's exceptions, because you can't learn the complexity at the very beginning."

This is just part of learning human stuff in this world. I'm going to go through the four when's. When not to resource, when not to orient, when not to take a deep breath, and then the fourth one is when you aren't sure what to do. That sort of, again, grain of salt in that these are ideas that you need to just have kind of swimming through your psyche and through your body as you move through this information and through this practice.

When not to resource, knowing darn well that you always can resource. So, while I'm saying when, maybe, you might not resource, it's not essentially law, right? This goes back to that professor that said, "You're going to learn things here and they're going to be different at the end, but it doesn't mean that the first things you learned still don't hold true. Depends on how much complexity is there." Someone who doesn't know how to process their felt sense and their interoception cannot process their anger properly, for example. And we'll get into anger in a couple of weeks.

I'll get into this. When not to resource, when to resource externally versus internally, depends, that's the word. Depends on many factors. On many factors. Again, resourcing we could say externally is, "Ah, that's the beautiful sky. Painting, flowers." Internally would be more, "I'm feeling the ground under me. I'm sensing the warmth of my belly, the good tea that I just drank." Even if you're listening to music and you feel how that shifts your internal state, that would be resourcing to your internal. When to do this resourcing, it depends on many factors.

Next line down. As more capacity, that's the word. As more capacity is cultivated, so a bigger pool. Bigger pool, swimming pool, and more containment is on board. Containment is on board. More exit paths, this is a long one. Paths and better biological embodiment. I'll read this a couple times. The need for external resources decreases, external resources.

So as more capacity ... first word, as more capacity is cultivated, bigger pool, second word, and more containment, third word, is on board. In other words, more exit paths, paths is the next word, and better biological embodiment, that's the next word, the need for external resources decreases. What that's basically saying is the more regulated you become, you don't need as much to resource yourself to stay in the moment. I think of a client I had ages ago. I still know

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her and she's doing so well and when she showed up the first time, she had this massive purse with oils and snacks and water and tea and crystals.

Nothing wrong with those things. I love all those things and by the end of our work, she would just show up with her wallet and her keys, didn't need it. That's capacity. That's the ability to contain and feel intensities that might occur traveling from home to city office. So she had the pool bigger, she knew how to exit stresses, and she didn't need all these resources to keep herself safe traveling to session and back. Again, nothing wrong with some crystals and carrying some water and all those things. You never know, but it does show that when you have more regulation, not only do you not need those resources, your blood sugar is more stable. You're not going to need to keep snacking, right? This is one thing that you'll find. As you become more regulated, your body is better able to burn fat as fuel, which is what we're supposed to burn for fuel.

We're not supposed to burn our muscles or even our sugar. So we are supposed to burn our sugar, but we want to be able to burn our high energy stores. So that is one of the things that occurs. As we get more regulated, we won't need these resources as much. So the next line down, we might not ... we might, excuse me, I'll start that again. We might consider not going to a resource when we are feeling a somatic experience bubbling up or already present. So we might consider not, so this is that choice point. Last night I slammed my hand in the door, I just sat down. I just felt it. That was my choice point. So again, you have to choose, I'm feeling this intense thing. Somatic, something bubbling up. So at this time, we might stick with what is being felt somatically so we can access it and integrate it.

Again, that example last night for me was this. Let's say you had that happen or you have a child who has that happen, who has not ever experienced pain, this comes into the functional freeze concept. A video I have done years ago, and we just redid it, where I use the example of, a kid falls and if you ignore that and they've never had that kind of pain, if you don't help them be in that pain and let them feel it, they will shut down. So let's just say your kid slams their hand in the door, you do want to be with them. You don't want to tell them they're fine because I can tell you that wasn't fine when I did that last night. They're in pain, so you need to let them feel it.

You've got to let them cry. You stay with them. You don't meddle with them unless of course, there's a break that needs to be tended to, but you let them feel it. You let them know it's okay to feel the pain and that you're there, and as they start to come down, that's when the tears,

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the shock comes out. Then, when they connect, that's when you connect. You might give them a hug and that's where ... Steven Terrell, one of our teachers, he works specifically with adoption and early trauma. He has in his office, he calls it boo-boo cream. Boo-boo cream. So it's just lotion, like Vaseline lotion or Lubriderm or something, but he has a big label on it that says "Boo-boo cream." So if they're working with the kid or something is sore, he'll ask afterwards, "Would you like some boo-boo cream on that?"

Usually, the kid says yes and then either the kid or he, he rubs it on, right? It's like, "Okay, we'll just give you a little ..." So these are little things. This is what we do with children. We have to play at their level, and that's a much better way of doing it than, "Do you want a candy? Do you want a treat?" Because then you always connect sugar and food with feeling better. Yeah, how many of us had that growing up? So that ability to just have them resourced with another human, with touch, that's what that boo-boo cream is doing. It seems silly, but it works. So there's no reason as adults, we can't have boo-boo cream. Just saying. Okay, final one down there, but. So again, this is in reference to when we should resource, when we should not resource when something occurs, but making the choice, that's the first word.

But, making the choice to not dive into the felt sense and honoring our limits by using an external or an internal resource is healing in itself. But making the choice to not dive into the felt sense and honoring our limits by using an external, that's the word, or internal resource is the final word, healing in itself. This is that example that I just gave you with the kid. As a parent or as a caregiver, you are their self-regulation. They don't know how to self-regulate that. So you have to be their external resource. Yeah, and then, that teaches them how to process that, but same as an adult. Again, if you don't feel that you have the resources to be with that, then that's where you might grab a blanket and contain yourself or go grab something or listen to something or just, "Hey, hey," to your partner, "I just did something that really hurt and scared me. Can you come sit with me?"

So there's ways that we can also choose not to just be with the somatic experience. Again, choice, choice, choice, choice. When we have that choice and we choose, I'm not ... yeah, I can't sit with this right now. I need something else. That is also ... that's asking for help, to go back to that idea of asking for help.

Three, page three. So again, this is regarding resources. So overriding our capacity creates more strain and survival stress and is counterproductive. So overriding our capacity and survival stress is counterproductive. Then, I have in brackets there, remember beach balls



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when we override, we're just putting more beach balls. We're not ... Again, let's say you tried to white-knuckle it through that sensation that just happened, but you're not ready. That's going to create more strain inside, because your breath isn't going to ease up.

You're not going to release that, that pain, the sensation. So again, this is where you have to be ... you have to honor where your system is at. So if all else fails, use resources, so that you're staying safe, so to speak, right? Then, whenever you can, dabble with what it might be like to not and make a conscious choice of that. It's very hard to have free will when we're stuck in survival stress. So what we're working with here is, we're cultivating another birthright of human being-ness, which is to have the free will to choose. So that's another important thing to remember. Still page three, number two, when not to orient. When not to orient. Now, my sense is, out of 307 people who are here live, there's a small, if not, large percentage of you who are finding that orienting isn't the most calming, isn't the most regulating. That's fine.

That just shows your system is not quite ready to be connected to that environment yet. Yet. Then, there'll be some of you whom, "Oh my gosh, orienting is so great. Don't ask me to feel in here." So there's two sides and how can we bring both in eventually so that we have full regulation and we have the ability to do both. So when not to orient? So the first line there, this is so individual. This is so, so individual. Orienting can take us out of processing internal sensation. That's the next line. Orienting can take us out of processing internal sensation. So that's somatic experience, but, next line, but is in brackets there, but it is better than disconnecting from ourselves and our environment. It's better. I'd rather one, orient and just even speak out loud. I'm seeing the trees, I'm seeing the clouds, computer, the paper.

Then, dissociate because the sensation is too intense or go into more overdrive, more survival. So it's better than disconnecting from ourselves and our environment. Next line down, you have to be the judge. So this comes back to choice, your own free will. You have to be the judge. I can't tell you, this is when you orient. If it were that easy, we wouldn't be here. This is when you feel your sadness. This is when you get angry. That would not work as much as they're trying, we are not robots. We are biological beings that have complexity and intricacy and a lot of wiring that is complex. So you have to know when and where. Next line down, you have to learn how to experiment. Experiment with what you can and cannot tolerate. You have to experiment with what you can and cannot tolerate. So for some of us, and I caught a note in the chat, someone said, "I'm better at orienting to sound. It's better if my eyes are closed."

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That's great. It's just showing that your stimulus, it's just too much for the visual to bring in that information, but when say, the eyes are closed or maybe the room is a bit dimmer, you can hear that's where music can be so powerful. You're still orienting to the environment. It's just sound. If someone is blind, I'm not going to tell them they can't orient. Of course, they can orient through sound, through vibration, temperature, the kinesthetic sense. So orienting is more than just visual. It's how we tend to teach it initially, but it's more than that. So you have to experiment with what you can and cannot tolerate. Just a reminder, orienting is a natural reflex. You walk outside, we want to be, "Huh, weather, temperature." You hear something loud, you're going to defensively orient to it. We need that, but when we're stuck in survival, we're either too hyper alert to that or we're not alert enough.

Then, that gets us into trouble as well. So by practicing deliberately orienting, it starts to rekindle, rewire those wires of being able to defensively explore the environment and also, explore the environment in non-defense. Three, when not to take a deep breath. So this is the same points for breath as for orienting. I already touched this a little bit a moment ago where I was talking about someone who was maybe hyperventilating and really in a panic stress state. You need to let that physiology play its course, so that it naturally comes down, just kind of like a fever. You want it to play its course. It's there for a reason. So sometimes we need to take a deep breath. Sometimes we need to take a deep breath. So know that me saying, "We don't want to take a deep breath in those instances," doesn't mean that you don't take a deep breath at some point, right?

The next line down, sometimes we just need extra oxygen. When would you need more oxygen? If we were to all start doing some Jazzercise right now, and I'd lead that, not that I would. For those of you that know Jazzercise, aerobics, something, you should get more of those. You're going to need more oxygen because you're moving more muscles. Muscles need oxygen, through the blood and you bring out the waste products, so you need more exchange. So sometimes you need to take a deep breath. You're going to pant if you're hiking up a hill. So again, this is all context dependent. Do you need to breathe more? Do you need to breathe less? It's important to understand that many of us have been taught through the mind body worlds to take a deep breath as soon as we feel anything intense. In working with clients privately, a very common thing I would see if someone was really new, is they would control their breathing.

So they would feel something intense. They would tell me and then, they would instantly start doing this. They would start controlling their exhale, and that was a cue to me, "Ah, this person

is not able to just let the breath be and let it shift, as they sense this intense somatic experience or have this intense memory." If anything, I would say in my years of private practice, I would tell people to breathe less and more shallowly. 9.999 times out of 10 versus "I need you to take a deeper breath," because often they're trying to control their breathing with the intense feeling. When we're working with freeze, and you guys all mention freeze at the very, very beginning of the chat, what happens when you're in freeze? Where does the breath go? It goes really down. It almost goes to its stopping. So oddly, when you're processing something that you might know is one of the culprits behind your functional freeze or that shock from that accident, you might find that your breath goes so slow that you're not even sure if you're still breathing.

You might not even be sure if you're still alive because in that moment of threat, it's very possible that your system was like, "This person's about to die." We better bring all things down, but what occurs is when you do that, it resets the system. It says, "Okay, we're finally feeling that ground zero of that shock trauma or that intensity," and what will inevitably happen is they'll hit it, they'll go really calm and then, they'll feel the intense terror, the panic, the threat. Then, it comes and then, the deep breath resets. Hopefully I didn't scare anybody with that. Then often, that's where the tears, that's where the shaking comes. That's where the deep grief comes. The trauma response finally comes out. This is why I'm not a big fan of breathwork retreats, where they're saying that they're working on people's traumas.

You can't breathe through that stuff. You have to go into that low zone of the high toned dorsal to snap out of it. Again, this is more advanced. I wouldn't do that with someone if they had never ever done anything with me, where they're learning how to stay connected, grounded, oriented. This is more advanced work, but this is the kind of thing that some of you might feel, as you move through the lessons and you're working with some of the areas of the body, like the diaphragms, the breath, the kidney adrenals. It will maybe put you into those states of that physiological death response. The freeze response. As far as I know, I haven't met any human who has not gone to that level of, "I think I might die soon, or this is so stressful, I can't handle it. I better dissociate." So that is where breath, I think is very fascinating and interesting.

So again, you get to be the judge. You get to feel your body. If taking a deep breath helps you and as a resource and you don't have the capacity yet, then take a deep breath, please. I always say, I would rather a parent take a deep breath and bypass their sensations and urge to hit their kid. If that's what you have, and you don't yet know how to process this internal stuff,

which is old stuff from your old childhood, then take a deep breath. It'll come. Eventually, it'll come.

One down. Number four. This is the when, for when you are not sure what to do, because that will happen when you're learning this, just like if I pull out the analogy of learning a second language as an adult, you're not going to get fluent in that foreign language in a couple of weeks. And you'll be at the train station in another country, and you're not going to know what to say, and that's where you have, "Do you speak English," memorized for that country. And usually, people do. Or that's where you have a backup. So when you are not sure what to do, do not worry, those are the three words, because bringing more fear, more survival into not knowing what to do just compounds the survival stress that's already there. So again, this is where that higher brain is super, super important.

You get to say, "Okay, I'm not sure what to do here." This is where you actually talk to yourself. "I'm not sure what to do here. I'm really intensely feeling something. I'm just going to go back to the basics." So that's what I have here. Go back to the basics. And it can help to talk to yourself, strange as that sounds. "I feel my feet. Am I feeling my feet? Oh no, I'm not. Oh, there they are." Dig them into the ground. That voice also stimulates the ventral vagal. It stimulates that parasympathetic. All right, plus remember, it's funny, I didn't even see that, but I already used the analogy. Learning a second language takes practice and time. So remember learning... that's the word... learning a second language takes practice and time.

As more neurosensory skills come into your repertoire... So this is a run on sentence, folks, so bear with me here. As more neurosensory skills come into your repertoire, all the lessons within the labs, this is the final line of page three, all the lessons within the labs coupled, that's a fancy word for saying brought together, so all the labs coupled with the theory, so those are the ABCs and one, two, threes, page four, flip the page, we start to string, that's the word, string together, the words of internal somatic awareness. We start to string together the words of internal somatic awareness. I can't stress enough how important it is to remember, a baby comes out of mom. It takes a long time for that baby to be fluent in language, walking, talking, dressing themselves, cleaning their room, and making a grilled cheese sandwich. It takes a long time to get a kid to that level.

So just remember, if you didn't have those great, yummy, fuzzy, co-regulation attuned things with your primary caregiver, and you're here learning this for the first time, it's going to feel a little clunky, just like it's clunky when a baby is learning how to roll over. When your child is

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learning how to cut food for the first time, it's clunky. They're not dextrous, but they get it. You get it. This is, again, I use the baby example because that just shows how neuroplastic we are. And so that is still in us, it's that practicing constantly, over and over and over again. With practice, next line down, we begin to naturally, with practice we begin to naturally move to our internal system without conscious thought, without thinking about it.

This means we are becoming more fluent in the language of our somatic experience. As we are getting more comfortable with it, we are growing nervous system capacity. We are growing nervous system capacity. That's the final word there in that second line. Third bullet point down, this means we are getting better at attuning to ourselves. That's the word, attuning to ourselves. Not to mention knowing what we need and when. This means we are getting better at attuning to ourselves, not to mention knowing what we need and when.

Again, this always funnels back to that infant. They don't know what they need at the beginning. They just cry. Their cries have different sounds. Those have to be attuned to. You get to know them as a caregiver, and then as they are quicker, as that response is quicker, the baby learns self-regulation. It just grows that way. It's exactly the same with you here. The quicker you can attune to yourself, the faster and the more capacity you build at the beginning. Again, like I said, it's going to be like, what? What is that sound? What does that mean? But then it improves. For many of us, next line down, this process of better attuning to ourselves becomes more fluent in our somatic experience and being with it with awareness is new territory.

So for many of us, I'll read that again, the process of better attuning to ourselves. Again, everyone, that's just following those impulses, yeah, it's just a different word for that, becomes more fluent in our somatic experience, in our embodiment, and being with it with awareness is a new territory, similar to how a newborn baby is constantly having new experiences. Has anybody found, as you've started this work, even for the newbies, that you're not so sure what the heck is going on? It's like you're like, "Is this me? Am I on another planet? This doesn't seem real," right? There'll be this feeling like something is off. That's a good sign, because that shows you're breaking out of the previous wiring. This is, again, why we're so complex because we have not only this biology and this mammalian physiology, but we have this sensory awareness that's processing so much, more than the speed of lightning in our brain and in our nervous system. So someone, a few of you, said yep.

Oh, and someone just said boring is the word coming up a lot. That's true. Being bored is often a sign that you're not in as much survival stress, hate to break that to everyone, because



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survival stress gives us a hit. Survival stress gives us a hit of chemicals, like cocaine. There's a reason that stuff is so addictive. Apparently, I found out the other day that ice baths, everybody is really into ice baths these days. I don't remember the exact amount. It was Carissa, one of our moderators posted it. The dopamine expression is twice as much going into a cold bath than having cocaine. That's why this is getting so popular. Now, there's nothing wrong with cold therapy, I do it myself, but you have to be very calculated about how you use it, and use it therapeutically.

Why does that happen? We're not meant to be in cold water. We're not deep sea creatures, we're hot-blooded, right? And so the moment you go into cold water, the system kicks up what branch of your parasympathetic? Your high tone dorsal. It's a dive reflex. That's why the big animals in the water can dive deep in ice-cold water in the Arctic, and they don't die. It's because they're meant for that. But we are not meant to be in the water like that, we're land creatures and we need lots of oxygen. So that dive reflex, when the human system feels it, it pumps out protection chemicals to keep us safe, and in euphoria essentially. Again, I'm not poo-pooing it. I cold-plunge, but it's used for therapeutic purposes, not for a dopamine hit every morning.

Got off track there. But yes, we need to attune to ourselves because that is what builds up our capacity to know where we need to go next. So again, we might feel a little out of place. And what occurs as we finish up these last two points here, there will be some of you, I can guarantee it, who will be lured into sabotaging yourselves because the old has been more familiar to you than the new of the next three weeks, or the next 12 weeks. So this is where you're building, again, think of building a house. Your foundations are going in. You build that foundation. You're not going to go and have a rave on the foundation the next day. That would be sabotaging that foundation. So this is where you almost need to go into monk mode in a little bit of a way.

Be very routine, do your work, notice things, be simple with how you bring this stuff in so that this stuff sticks, and then you'll be at a different capacity. Then you'll be in what we would call the new state of energy where it actually is, oh, I literally feel like I've been reborn, because you probably have, right? And then things will change. You'll find relationships change, what you like to eat might change, your habits change, and usually those change for the better, but it'll feel weird. And people around you might see you and be like, "I don't know if I like this new version of Irene. She's not the same." And it's like, "Yep, you're right. I'm not the same." And then that's where you have to stay strong in your conviction, and remember why you were

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doing this in the first place, which is to get better, to have regulation, so your system isn't sick, and isn't unwell and burnt out.

So you have to go back to that original thesis as to, why am I here? It is because of this. It's complex stuff, folks, but it gets simpler. When you have regulation, everything gets simpler. But this beginning learning, it is a little more complex. It's a little more intricate. So the final second line there from the bottom, this is how building capacity creates nervous system regulation in an adult. This is how building capacity, and I'm going to really underscore, real capacity, because there's some things out there that make you think you're building capacity, but you're not. You're just feeling a little better, right? Real capacity. Whereas, again, for an infant, this is the final text here, their self-regulation is created via co-regulation with another human.

So again, I've been bringing in the baby thing over and over again. So this isn't new information. Remember, as an infant, their self-regulation is created by co-regulation with another human, as a result of that attunement. You have to remember, you can be solo and single and do this work without another human. Of course, it's nice to have another human if you can. But because of our brain, and our ability to create and have resources that are very different from, say, animals in the wild, you can connect to things. You can connect to resources, you can connect to your visualization. You can connect to art, music, and pets.

So you can bring this element of self-care and self attunement, not can, you do. You bring this element of self-care and self attunement into your process, into your working with yourself, and that is what creates the co-regulation. It's like you're creating co-regulation with yourself. And again, I'm not saying it isn't nice to, if you do have the capacity to be with people, to be with a therapist, a practitioner, a body worker, wonderful. Some of you have kids, be with them, animals, pets. But you can also do so much solo. And this is also, again, I've mentioned this when attuning to even the lessons, I know some of you have done Elia's lessons, the movement lessons, his energy is different than my energy. Seth's energy is different from my energy, than Elia's energy. Use these resources within the course as a way to also co-regulate, right?

Sometimes people will say that they'll just pop on a training call or a lesson, and they're not doing it, but it's just in the field while they're doing stuff. And it serves as a reminder to, oh yeah, feel my feet, da da da da, feel this, da, da, da, right? So it's the same reason we like to listen to music sometimes when we're doing things, it's no different. Common thing I see a lot of people do is they'll just have the TV on. A lot of people will just have the television on, and

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they're not watching it, but it's giving them company. It's giving them something to attune to. And there's nothing wrong with that at all. So we covered a lot in under 90 minutes. Thank you, Mara, for being in the chat and connecting with the little bits that are in there.

Just remember, you are at the beginning, for those who are new here. Really, really acknowledge that you're learning new stuff. And if it feels a little messy and a little confusing, then you're on the right track. Just go back to the kids, go back to the babies. You're at the beginning stages. The good news is it's not going to take you 10 years. Doesn't have to take you 10 full years. If I think about a kid who's 10 years old who can do lots of things right? A lot can occur when we're adults because we are in control. We're not being controlled, I hope not, by a parent or someone. So as an adult, a mature adult, you have the capacity to make those controls shift, and you'll find that you'll probably be better at setting boundaries as you go through this. And that's what speeds it up.

A kid can't set those boundaries, right? You can. And so that's where this doesn't take, in my opinion, as long as learning how to completely learn from day one as an infant. So we will see you all next week for training call number three. Seth has his Q&A call this Thursday, so just know that all that stuff is for you to take in at your leisure, or to listen to the recordings. Keep playing with the exercises this week. Again, the joints lesson is a big one this week that is new. So go into that, experiment with that. And just, again, remember as I said at the beginning, that you can repeat. I encourage you, we encourage you to repeat the lessons. If you're looking to practice a little bit more, go back to lessons from the first lab or the second lab. Just keep layering in as much as you can. Or if you feel like you need to just pause and let things integrate, do that too. Okay, good learning everyone. Thanks for your attention. Thanks to the team who's here, Bonnie and Mara. We will see you later. Bye everyone.