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All right. Welcome everybody. This is, I believe, the fifth Q&A call for SBSM 15.0, and I'm happy to see you all here. Good to be here with you. We got again ... So we're in the full season of questions now, getting way more than I can answer. So we have a couple common themes today and then about 15 questions that I chose. I was able to reply to some people via email with a quick answer, and others, you may have gotten a referral to go back to the general questions thread and post there. So that's the way we have to do it now when we get so many. So I hope that's all right. And I tried to pick questions that could be relatable to the most number of people. So starting, the first thing that actually a lot of people wrote in about was sympathetic energy and different ways that it shows up.

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Some were just questions like, "Hey, what's going on here when I feel this?" And others were more about, "What do I do? How do I work with this?" So the first thing I thought I would do is just name some common ways in which sympathetic energy can show up. Before I do that, I just realized I totally neglected to welcome Mark. Thank you so much for being here. Mark Reed Smith is in the chat, and I believe Bonnie is here as well. So thank you, my lovely team members for being here. So, okay, common ways sympathetic energy can show up. One of the biggest ones people write about a lot, restless legs. When you're laying in bed and those legs are twitching and wanting to go. Being fidgety in general, not being able to sit still. Sudden spikes in heart rate is another big one, or a sudden pounding heart.

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One person referenced every time they wake up from an afternoon nap, their heart is just racing, pounding. Yep, very common. Intrusive thoughts or racing thoughts, obsessive planning. Always thinking about the next step. "What am I going to do next?" Feeling shaky or trembling, twitching, having twitches that move through the musculature. Having aggressive, angry feelings or thoughts a lot. Anxiety, of course, is a classic one. Feeling fearful, phobic. Nightmares, having intense nightmares. All of these are classic normal representations of how sympathetic energy can show up, and when it's, of course, rooted in past trauma. When there's fear or anger, incomplete fight/flight responses stuck in the system, these are many of the ways in which it will tend to appear. So one thing to consider.

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When we notice there's sympathetic energy showing up in some way, it's always a choice point, and there's two ways we can go. We can think about settling and soothing ourselves, or we can go the direction of working with that sympathetic energy in some way, making space for it, expressing it, allowing it. And both are totally valid. When we maybe have less experience with this work, when we're newer at it, when we have a history of early developmental trauma, if we're aware that our capacity is quite low for one reason or another, that is usually times in which we want to think about settling, growing our capacity, learning how to soothe ourselves, learning that there's ways to bring ourselves down from feeling the sympathetic energy. That is one of the big ways in which we do increase capacity over time. It's kind of like the system learns like, "I'm upset. I'm upset. Oh, you're responding and you're learning. I'm experiencing that I can be soothed. Okay. Wow, I'm not just stuck with that activation. There's options. There's ways to feel better."

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Learning that one can do that is a big part of what can increase the capacity overall over time. It's like you get experienced and seasoned a bit and the system starts to feel safer because it knows that there's an exit path. So what might those exit paths be? Things like, of course, orienting to the external. Finding something outside of ourselves that is not shaky and trembly or twiggy or thinking obsessively or feeling pissed off. Finding the tree, the plant, the painting on our wall, the safe, familiar things outside of us, and really putting our attention there. Maybe we combine that with our resources. This is why we stress resources early on. What can you go to? It doesn't matter if it's a cup of herbal tea or a joint, whatever. If it's a substance that soothes you, great.

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Of course some are more destructive than others, so we want to try to avoid anything that's really, really harmful. You don't want to go binge-drinking or that kind of thing, if possible. But if it's a glass of wine or having a smoke, or maybe it's a bath. Whatever it is, maybe it's a show that you really like that you go to. Maybe it's something like yoga or maybe it's a form of breath work. There can be so many things, external or internal that are our resources. So what are they? What works for me? How do I go to that?

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What might it be like to orient outside while having a nice cup of tea? Whatever that is. Maybe I wrap a blanket around myself and feel that containment. So all these ways in which we're learning to settle in different ways. The kidney adrenal lessons, those are really helpful for many people, and we're just getting into that now in lab five with the drop in your adrenals. And we had the introduction in lab four, of course, the kidney adrenal awareness, and now in lab five, there's the drop in your adrenals lesson. And that is really about thinking about how those kidneys can just soften, find the surface underneath you, just coming down, coming down. That might be a resource for you. Maybe you put on that neurosensory lesson.

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Whatever it is, know your resources. So those are all kinds of ways in which we may think about settling. And it may be something totally that I'm not naming. There's all sorts of neurosensory practices. Maybe working with the diaphragms is settling for you. We don't know. There is a list in the most frequently asked questions. I saved it here just so it's convenient. I'll put it in the chat. So on this FAQ, there's all the practices that tend to be settling and soothing for most people, and not all of them will be, but usually one of them or two of them, or three of them are. So that's a FAQ that is on the most frequently asked questions page. All of the lessons listed there are ones that tend to be soothing and settling, and all of them are ones that are now available. Oh, nope, sorry. There's a few that aren't available yet if you're a newbie, but there's a bunch that are. So check those out.

So that's the one side of the thing. Like, "Okay, I'm feeling this sympathetic activation and I just want to settle myself. I want to know that I can do that." Now, if we are further along in this work, if we have more capacity, if we don't have early developmental trauma, maybe we had a good childhood, solid wiring and then we had some shock traumas later on, that kind of stuff, then it may be that we are ready to start working with the activation. So that is the other way to go. Now, I just saw a thing pop up, "When is your brainstem practice going to be available?" That comes out at the end of lab seven. It is a settling practice, however, the reason we wait that long to introduce the brainstem work is it can be very, very powerful.

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Just that it can bring a big shift into the system. The brainstem is the center of vigilance and trying to keep us safe, and when we change that, it can have a very, very big effect. So we want to wait a while before we introduce that. That being said, there's actually a question later

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today that I'll reference sort of an intro into working with the brainstem a little bit, so hang out for that. The list, I just popped it there in the chat. Oh, sorry. I sent it to Mark by mistake. Thanks, Mark. Looks like Mark just popped it into the main thread. Awesome. There it is. Let me just change my ... There we go. Okay. So there, it just popped in there.

(00:09:48):

Okay. "So how do we work with sympathetic activation if we feel that we're ready to do that?" Well, follow your impulses, number one. And that's unknown. What does my body want to do? Oftentimes we have to discover that. Now, many times, if it's something like restless legs, an entry point is just moving the legs. Laying in bed, I used to have restless legs all the time. I don't anymore. It does end as you get that sympathetic energy out. But one of the things I would do if I'm laying in bed and like, "Oh my God." Instead of trying to just go to sleep, I just get up and I sit on the edge of my bed and I just run. I let my legs just run, run, run, run, run until they're tired. And that could be for minutes. Let the energy move. If there's twitching in the arms, maybe it's like, "Oh, is there something that my arms want to do?" Again, it may be unknown. We may have to discover. A lot of this work is a process of discovery about ourselves. Understand that it can take time. Someone referenced in the questions, "Oh man, I've had these restless legs for a few weeks." Well, it's not uncommon to have them for years. I had restless legs for years. So once I started learning how to work with it, I would say it was a few months of, "Okay, every time I feel this, I'm getting up and I'm mobilizing that energy." I think it was about a few months of that, and then I just kind of stopped having it. So be patient, understand this energy has often been packed up for quite a long time. It's not just going to resolve all at once. It can take a lot of repetition sometimes.

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Another question was about, "Well, what if I'm feeling really rageful or angry? What if I get triggered and I'm having all these angry thoughts towards someone, but they're not the problem? I know intellectually that this person is fine, but my survival energy has been associated with them." Someone asked if it was okay to do the healthy aggression practices with such a person in mind. Absolutely. If someone is triggering you, obviously we don't want to act out on that person in reality, but if your system has associated them with your trauma, I'd say it's okay to use their image as part of an internal practice and imagination. And then maybe you can link it up to where the actual source is. For many of us, it's our parents. If you

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read the Annihilation article, which is on my site, which again, we will get to in the next lab, but it's also open source, and maybe Mark, you can pop that into the chat.

(00:12:58):

It's on my website. This is When it's Okay to Annihilate Somebody. People have asked like, "Oh my gosh, is that okay to do with my parents?" Absolutely. You're not actually harming anybody. It's working with the internalized, what I call avatars. It's these images of people who hurt us that we've taken in, and those images and those feelings and associations live within us. When we destroy those people on the inside, it actually frees us up to have a more compassionate relationship with the real people. That's at least been my experience and the experience of many people I know. So you're not harming anybody when you're imagining destroying them and maybe acting that out as part of your personal process. It actually can be quite liberating. So is it okay to do that with your parents? Is it okay to do that with people who you know intellectually are innocent, but they're triggering you?

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Absolutely. No one is going to be harmed, and it'll probably be helpful for you. Another thing is, remember, as I've talked about a few times, remember SIBAM, this idea of the different elements of human experience. Now, I have another question asking, "Hey, how come there's nothing in the course about SIBAM when you talk about it a lot on the calls?" The reason is ... well, one, it's a proprietary thing. It was developed by Peter Levine, and also it's really something that we used to really only think of as something that a clinician, like someone who's working with clients needed to know. But it was a really good point, and actually we've decided to create an additional resource that just explains it so it's there in writing on the site. But for those of you who this is new, this concept of SIBAM, that's an acronym, S-I-B-A-M, and each one of those letters stands for an element of our human experience. So S is sensation, I is image, B is behavior, A is affect, which is our emotional expression, and M is meaning.

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So one of the questions was, "I feel like I've been doing this. Maybe it's the restless legs. I've been working with this for weeks and nothing's shifted." Well, one, okay, remember, it takes time. Also, sometimes there may be elements of SIBAM that are missing. So maybe it's not enough just to run, maybe we need to actually visualize. Maybe we need to imagine who or what we are running from. Maybe it's our parents, maybe it's an angry monster, maybe it's a



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church, maybe it's a school, maybe it's a teacher, who knows? But seeing ourselves successfully fleeing as our legs are actually running, that can be quite powerful. And we can also visualize a safe place that we're going towards. So this is all part of bringing in the element of imagination, that I. You've got the behavior, which is the sensation, is the restless legs. The behavior is the legs are now running. The image comes. Maybe the affect becomes part of it. Maybe you start to feel like, "Ooh," some of that effort, and it comes out onto the face, or maybe you make a little sound that comes along with the running. The meaning would eventually be, "I got away." That's what happens. The musculature is waiting to catch up with reality in these cases. It's like your legs, your neurons are still saying you need to run away. Well, when you successfully complete that, you get away, and it's like the body can catch up with your reality. "Here I am. I made it." So that might be well served by using your imagination.

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There's another way to use your imagination when working with the flight side of things, which is what if you start by running from the thing, but then you stop and you turn around and you face the thing? What if you move into more of a fight, a self-protection? Remember, it's your imagination. You can be as big and as powerful as you want to be in your imagination. So what if you grow to be a giant and crush the thing that you were running from? And then that changes the affect into more like, "Ah, rage." And then maybe it's not running. You're stomping. The behavior changes, the image changes, you're crushing the thing. So there's all different ways in which we can work with sympathetic energy. Sometimes just physically is fine. Sometimes we need to include emotions. Sometimes we need to really express ourselves. Sometimes we may need to say words. Sometimes we may need to imagine. Okay, I'm just checking my notes here for a sec.

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So sometimes we may get activation that's maybe ultimately from a trauma, but it's being aggravated by a present situation, and that could be all sorts of things. So someone asked about not being able to sleep in the same bed as their partner, which I think they said, has gotten more intense as they're doing this work. I've heard this a lot. Yeah, that's a thing. Irene and I generally don't sleep together ever. We both just prefer to have our own space, to have our own sort of energy and our field to ourself at night. It's all personal preference, of course, but if you are in a partnership and you're feeling like, "Hey, I need to have some time sleeping by myself at night because it's too much."

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It's not like the person is bad. It's just its input. It is a person, it's a human being. It's some kind of energy. It's being in someone else's field. So maybe you're doing this work and it's intense and you need a deeper rest. You need to not have any stimulation at night. That's okay. It may be upsetting for your partner, and hopefully they will understand, "Hey, this isn't forever, but I need to have some space tonight." So there can be things in our environment that activate us that we can change that maybe aren't about the past so much. The sensitivity we have may be due to the past, but the activating thing might be just part of our reality.

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Also, someone asked about ... Well, I'll just read the question. They said, "I used to exercise a lot, and almost after a year off, recharging, I did 20 minutes of exercise. I listened to my body and I did random movements and dancing and some structured exercise and felt amazing in the moment. Days two and three later, I had anxiety spikes and nightmares in which the safest person I know was trying to kill me. I haven't changed anything else except added nature walks. So I'm assuming the exercise was too activating. How do I titrate it back? I feel energized and I feel an urge to move again." Well, one way to look at it is that maybe it wasn't too activating, maybe it was just activating enough to get some of the underlying stuff moving. If you're feeling energized and ready to move again, well that's good, and you followed that and it sounds like it then unpacked some of your sympathetic activation associated with trauma, which has to happen. We can't keep this stuff wrapped up forever. Now, again, it all depends on capacity. Maybe the right thing to do is focus on soothing, but this is after a year off essentially of resting, the energy is returning. All right. It's not necessarily a bad thing that you got those anxiety spikes and nightmares. That's just part of what happens. So then how can you work with that? And maybe understand that if you do more intense exercise, that might happen, and then you work with it.

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You can certainly play with titration. You can certainly play with doing a little less. But when I read that, I was like, "Well, yeah. That's kind of what happens." And it sounds like the energy is truly there. So in that case, all right, let's work with those anxiety spikes. Let's see what happens if we maybe feel the sensations of that and think about making a little space in the shoulder diaphragms, or in the breathing diaphragm. We just got the diaphragm lessons this

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week, this lab, so what might it be like to work with those? Yeah, nightmares, like I said, normal. It's a normal part of this stuff processing through. Okay. So the second common theme was situations in which it may be that some kind of additional support is needed, and often in the form of bodywork. So, also, someone had asked how to tell the difference between an incomplete procedural memory versus repetitive muscle patterns, like repetitive motion injury, that kind of thing. I'll answer that part first. One can often lead to the other. So, if we have a stuck procedural memory, some way in which our body wanted to move, and it didn't get to move, and those instructions are still kind of firing away, over time, that can lead to a compensatory movement pattern that then becomes just part of our posture. So, it can become sort of ingrained. And it may be that, yeah, we need to do that work of discovering the movements that wanted to happen, but we also may need to bring in some physical manipulation to help break up the tissues.

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So, someone said, I recently learned that I hitched my right shoulder up, and twisted my body to the left in my relaxed posture. Yeah, that could well be due to old injuries, maybe incomplete procedural memories, stuff that's been embedded in the system for a long time. I certainly had a lot of stuff like that. I had many injuries in my youth. I had many repetitive motions that I did that were not good, posturally, because I just didn't know, I wasn't unaware. Skateboarding, all sorts of stuff. And over time, that turned into poor movement patterns, and postural patterns that were associated with chronic tension. So, there was trauma underneath, and as I worked with the trauma, a lot of it loosened up, but I still needed quite a bit of, and still do need quite a bit of manipulation, physical manipulation to help break up the tissues. So, some of the things that can be useful for that, osteopathic work can be very helpful. There's very different kinds of osteopaths I've learned.

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The ones who tend to be, I think it's called the French School, the European school, are trained in much more subtle ways of working, which I found really beneficial. An osteopath, well-trained, will be able to do everything from physical manipulation to working with your connection to the cosmos. It's incredibly detailed, and nuanced, layered work, so they can be really helpful. Less subtle stuff sometimes may be needed. I did lots of rolfing, and myofascial work, which was really necessary, and really painful. It was really important to have a safe person to do that with so I could cry, and wail, and say, "Stop." And it was really important.



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There was some stuff that's not going to get changed except through physical manipulation. There's also much subtler ways of working with the fascia. Bowen therapy is quite useful. I've also got a lot of benefit from that, and it's much more subtle. Bowen is what it's called. B-O-W-E-N. That also works with the fascia, and with the nervous system, and can be quite helpful.

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Someone asked about being, they knew that they found out they were pulled out with forceps as a baby, and want to know what might be useful to recover from that trauma. Craniosacral can be really helpful. The fluids will get quite disrupted by that use of forceps. And also there can be some physical imprints. So, craniosacral, and osteopathic work could both be useful for that. Another indication that maybe we need some kind of physical assistance is some kind of sensation that just never changes. Someone said, "I feel every day some kind of trap sensation in my upper back between my shoulder blades, and when I feel the sensation for minutes, and minutes, nothing changes. It feels like a lack of flexibility in my spine. When I sit on a chair with no back support, but in a comfortable position, I can feel it more, for example, when I play piano." So, yeah, it may be that it needs some help, needs some physical help from another person.

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Just sitting, and observing something isn't always going to change it, especially if it's associated with some kind of chronic bracing. Another thing that can be really useful for this kind of stuff is Feldenkrais. So, doing one-on-one sessions with a good Feldenkrais practitioner. That last question made me think of that, particularly, about something happening between the shoulder blades that could be really useful to get some Feldenkrais one-on-one sessions. Both Mara and Rebecca who are part of our team are great Feldenkrais practitioners, and I believe that they are on the page of practitioners available for sessions on our website, so they could be useful to connect with if you're interested in doing that one-on-one Feldenkrais work. Yeah, the nervous system work, the trauma work expressing, allowing the emotions, completing the movement patterns, following our impulses, learning how to settle all of the stuff, it's foundational. We need this work for everything else to be integratable, and successful, but we also do need other stuff.

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We almost always will need some kind of other assistance, be that in the form of a different kind of mental therapy, or physical work. And I can tell you, man, Irene, and I, we both have gotten a lot, a lot of bodywork, a lot, I mean weekly for years, and years, and years, and years almost. So, it's a part of it, and especially if we've been holding onto this stuff for a long time. It also depends on the nature of your trauma. So, Irene, and I both had lots of physical injuries that were associated with traumatic stress. So, that often makes that kind of body work even more needed. All right, let's take a little pause before I move on to the individual questions. Feel free to get some water, or step away if you want. Someone asked about PT, physical therapy. Yeah, I didn't mention that, because very often those people are not trauma-informed, and a physical therapist who doesn't understand trauma can really screw you up.

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So, a good physical therapist that does understand trauma could be amazing. It's just they're not that common, unfortunately. So, that's why I didn't mention it. Yes, you can do Feldenkrais therapy online. I work with a practitioner, so yeah, it's online sessions. I just put my laptop where he can see me, and yeah, it works great. Massage, yeah, that actually can be good. I didn't mention it because it's less refined sometimes, but yeah, a good massage therapist that understands trauma, or at least is safe, right? I mean, the foundational thing is, is our practitioner, or someone we feel safe around? It doesn't matter what the modality is, if we don't feel safe with them, they can be the most skilled osteopath in the world, but if we don't feel safe with them, it's not going to be good. So, yeah, ask how a practitioner works. Absolutely. Having communication with your practitioners is so important. Like, "Hey, I may need to ask you to stop. I may have emotion, I may cry. Is that okay? Are you going to be able to hold space for that?"

(00:32:13):

It's really important to have those conversations with someone when we're seeking out that kind of help. Okay. All right, individual questions. So, "I am stuck around the area of finances. I've had a couple jobs here, and there, but I got so many rejections since I'm an immigrant, many discriminations due to my accent. And on top of that, having a disorganized attachment style. I started my business during COVID, but I have not been able to monetize it the way I want. Can you help me understand why I'm so afraid of being financially independent, and constantly find myself in the same pattern around money, although I want to be successful."

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So, this is a really common thing. We actually hear quite a lot from various folks who are going through this work, just having difficulty making money, or being in repetitive patterns of self sabotage, or of not being able to get motivated, of being in a sort of state of lack around money.

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So, money essentially represents security, and abundance. And when we grow up with trauma, or experience it later in life, there is a way in which our life force abundance, and security is taken from us. It's one way of viewing it, archetypally. Also, when we've lived through trauma, and it's still unresolved, this is true anyway of all humans, but especially if this is the case, and we're living with unresolved trauma, change equals bad. No matter how positive our higher brain might recognize that change to be, our reptilian brain, our brain stem, doesn't want change. No, I would rather just be with what's familiar. Always. And that's, like I said, that's just kind of the case of the brain stem in general. But when we are living with unresolved trauma, the brain stem, and the limbic brain, in general, have a lot more juice than they normally do. So, those messages from the brain stem can be extra urgent, and extra loud, and they can be totally subconscious. That can be a big part of what can keep us stuck. So, working with the brain stem can be a very useful part of this work.

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And as I mentioned before, I will reference that a little bit now. So, there is a full audio lesson that I actually recorded called Watering the Brainstem that will be released at the end of lab seven. But if you want to start exploring the principles of it now, and you don't have access to that if you're not an alumni, just start doing this in little bits. Usually when you're laying down, or you're sitting such that your head, and your neck can be supported, you want it to have a firm place of feedback behind you, just start thinking about the brainstem. That area where your skull meets your spine, meets your neck, and you don't want to pressure it, you don't want to try to get it to do anything. You just sort of say, "Hi. Hello, hello back there, brainstem." And you hold an intention of kindness, connection. You don't try to get it to do something different. You just, "Hey, how's it going? How's it going? I hear you, I feel you."

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Yeah. And then maybe see if you can just notice the feeling of support, and you sort of introduce your brainstem to the fact that there's support. Feel that? Yeah. Yeah, there's

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something there. Hey. All right. You can use your hand also if it feels nice to touch, just start building a relationship for now. When we get to the lesson that introduces actual sort of working with change. And again, that can be really powerful. So, a classic example of that, I did a session with a woman once, and I worked with the brainstem, which was a chronically tight area, and it responded really well. It softened, and great, and I said, be sure, I really recommend that you don't drive after this. Go for a walk, take time, sit, maybe take a couple hours, just wait to drive. But she didn't, and immediately got into a car accident. That's how powerful the brainstem is. It is the area that is about being vigilant, and aware of our environment.

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So, any shift to it can drastically change how we perceive what's happening around us. And so we really want to be slow, and careful when we work with it. Like I said, when I'm working with someone's brain stem with touch, I'm not asking it to do anything. I'm not asking it to soften. I'm just saying, "Hi, I'm right here. I'm right here with you." And then as a result, it often does soften. Doesn't respond well to pressure at all. It is like that little lizard that's hiding under the rock, and just wants to stay right there. So, getting back to this question, it may be that your brainstem is running the show right now, and wants you to stay stuck. So, see what happens if you start working with it in the way I've described, and just keep doing the work, in general. I believe this, maybe not everybody does, but I believe that what we have access to, and experience in our external life, and in our work life is fundamentally determined by what we have access to in our internal life.

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So, the more inflow, and abundant we are in our life energy, in ourself, the more that can become manifest on the outside. So, it always starts with the internal work, in my opinion.

Okay. "Hi, Seth. Over the time that I've been doing SBSM, I've learned, or developed a sensitivity, and discomfort, or a displeasure with bright overhead lighting. As might be obvious, I'm in a place of curiosity about how to conceptualize this, and what to do. How do we work with this?" All right, so I picked this one, because this is a great example of as we start to do this work, and we get a little better, and we get more regulated, and we release our trauma, we will very often become more sensitive to things that are actually bad for us, such as bright overhead, especially fluorescent lighting.

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But any type of bright lighting is not good for us as humans, especially if it's in the blue light spectrum, which it sounds like is what you're talking about. Most office lights, department stores, grocery stores, any sort of public place that we go into usually is going to have this bright blue light, and that's not actually good for us. It stops melatonin production, and spikes cortisol levels. So, cortisol is that stress hormone, right? So, it is not surprising that you're noticing this, and the question is, well, what do I do about it? Unfortunately, there isn't some practice that's going to make it easier, because what's happening is you're just hearing your body more accurately about what isn't good for you, which is a good thing, but you're bumping up against the reality that our world is a place in which it's really hard not to be poisoned.

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You have to work pretty hard not to be poisoned in this world right now. There's so many toxins around us, even the forms of light that we got bombarded with. So, one thing you can do is if you want, you can get blue light filter glasses. They're available in many places. You can watch the videos on Circadian Rhythm on Irene's YouTube. There's a whole playlist about this stuff, and there's various links, and resources there, including links to these blue light filtering glasses. So, that's one option. Understand that you're not going to be harmed if you have to pop into Walmart for 15 minutes, but yeah, you just sort of feel it. It's just like, "Ugh, this sucks." And yeah, it sucks. Know that your perception is right. It's not good for you, and you'll be okay. Get back out into the sunlight. There's lots of practices we can do to ameliorate the effects of the toxicity that's around us, connecting to the ground with bare feet, getting natural light into our eyes.

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Those are two of the biggest ones. But yeah, this is part of what happens is we become more sensitive to things that are really bad for us. That could be light, that could be artificial sense. Like Irene and I now have kind of a hard time traveling sometimes because so many people use scented laundry detergent in Europe, so many people wear cologne, and perfume. It's like an assault walking down the street. It was crazy in Italy, and we were just like, "Oh, my God." So, it's like, "Okay, I guess we've got to just focus on detoxing, and go to the park where there's more space." We also become more sensitive to toxic people, people in situations that maybe



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before we could have just brushed off. It's like, "No, this really is irritating to me. I don't want to be around this person. I'm not going to."

(00:42:41):

So, it's all, all right. It's just kind of a pain in the butt. We're living in a world that's run on survival energy in which most people are traumatized, and not noticing the toxicity around them. So, if you're starting to notice, good, it means you're more healthy. And also, sorry, it kind of sucks.

All right. "I have early developmental trauma, and grew up with domestic abuse. I coped by going into freeze, and bullying myself to work hard with periods of total collapse. I'm focusing on building capacity, but freeze quickly takes over. Rest is hard to come by. I'm trying not to push myself, including being obsessed with SBSM, but if I don't, I just lie on the sofa, not wanting to do anything. I'm also anxious about overdoing it. I sense the freeze telling me that I can't cope anymore. How do I reassure it without sinking further into it?" Okay, well, that is the message of freeze. I mean, you're hearing accurately the message of freeze is I can't. I can't do this. That's the mental representation of that physiological state is one of collapse.

(00:43:56):

So, very often, and it sounds like this may be useful, we need to find a middle ground. So, right now what you're describing is a normal representation of I'm either going, going, going, fueled by sympathetic energy, or I'm collapsed into a puddle, and freeze. Totally normal. So, there's many ways to start changing that. It sounds like for you, one way may be to start working with the freeze state. Don't be afraid of it. If you find that you want to go there, or your system is going there, just allow yourself to go there, and work with that place. So, that means you allow it to happen, but then you start to do more ventral, vagally type of things. So, maybe you're just laying on the sofa. The option would normally be to push yourself into momentum, probably using your sympathetic energy. Instead, I would say, well, what if you just lay on the sofa, and you start really feeling your connection with the sofa, and then maybe you start making a little sound. Maybe it's just a little humming.

(00:45:18):

Or maybe you start bringing in some self touch, and some containment, or maybe you wrap a blanket around. You start orienting externally while doing that. Maybe you have some

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resources there, like your cozy teddy bear. Something like bring in resources, and ventral vagal stimulating activities into the freeze state. So, you're starting to find a way to help that emergency brake gently lift rather than pushing into action. Another option is from that place of sort of freeziness is gently stimulate the sympathetic nervous system. So maybe now you start just, okay, I'm just going to start squeezing my fists. Just pulsing, squeezing, get a rhythm going. Maybe I do some humming with that. Sorry, water. And yeah, maybe you'll look kind of weird, like what often happens with this work. Someone walks in and you're laying on the sofa, squeezing your fists and humming to yourself. Well, yeah, that's somatic work. Welcome. So let yourself be weird. It's pretty important.

(00:46:41):

But yeah, maybe you sit up. You don't leap into doing, but maybe you simply sit up, and now you're feeling, and maybe you're looking around a little bit. And maybe you play with your posture. Like, "Oh, freeze wants me to sit like this. Okay. Maybe I'll just look around a little bit. What's up here? Okay. And I'll go back." Maybe I'll just, "Oh, wow, I can tilt my pelvis back a little bit. That helps my spine straighten. Maybe I'll play with that a little bit." Bringing in little interventions, little differences so that you start to find the middle ground between collapse and push.

(00:47:26):

Another way might just be more passive, like playing music. Put on music, something to listen to. That also stimulates the ventral vehicle. Maybe you just want to chill out and watch a show. Well, is there a show where you really care about the characters? And you can start to feel some of that social engagement, quality, believe it or not, from a show where you care about the characters. And then maybe while you're watching that show, you start to see if you can feel your butt, right? There's just so many ways in which you can start to explore and bring in little shifts.

(00:48:05):

Okay. "What general guidance would you give from a somatic-experiencing lens to those who are trying to heal from the trauma of a near-suicidal experience or suicidal thoughts?" So this is an important one, because we actually don't... Suicidal thoughts and ideation is outside of our scope of practice with somatic-experiencing. We would say that that person is in crisis and they

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need to access crisis-appropriate support. This work really can't be done well in a crisis. It's too refined and nuanced and subtle, and you have to have at least a little baseline of stability.

(00:48:50):

So for the first part, this question is about trying to heal from a near-suicidal experience, absolutely, there's stuff that I can talk about. The second part, if someone is actively having suicidal thoughts, we would always refer them to a crisis line. So on the Smart Body Smart Mind site, there is a section under the admin and support tab that says, "In crisis?" And on that page are resources for people who are in crisis all around the world, North America, Canada, Europe, et cetera. So that's the first thing to do. If you're having suicidal thoughts or ideation, talk to someone. They're trained to help with that, and that is the appropriate form of support. So I really encourage people to use that.

(00:49:42):

Now, if you're not actively suicidal and you're working with the trauma of an attempt, then that sort of falls into the near death experience camp. And there's no simple technique, I would say. I mean, it's about reconnecting to yourself in safe ways, building that relationship with yourself in all the ways that we teach. But one thing in particular that can be useful is these certain words. Now, this is something I've seen Peter use a lot in working with this, which is... And usually in the context of orienting in some way to the present environment, just seeing where you are and simply saying, "I'm alive, I survived, and I'm here." And really just feeling those words. Sometimes he'll also use, "I'm alive, I survived, and I'm real." I'm real, because that feeling of dissociation, derealization can often be a part of that, right? "I'm alive, I survived, and I'm here. I'm real. This is where I am." Yup.

(00:51:05):

Doing that with somebody can be even more powerful, being witnessed in those words, in that declaration. Be it a therapist or a friend, a safe loved one. But affirming those words, affirming the feeling of those words. Now, it may start out just as words, like that's okay. Eventually you may be able to feel the felt sense of those words, the quality of, "I'm alive. Like holy shit. I'm here." And seeing where you are.

(00:51:41):

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Also, it can be helpful to reclaim connection to yourself very specifically, like as simple as you're in the shower or in a bath or something, and you're just, "This is my arm. Wow, okay. Yep, I'm feeling my arm. This is my arm. This is my hand. Okay. This is my wrist." Naming it, naming your body to yourself. Reconnecting, reclaiming your connection.

(00:52:18):

Now, way down the road from all of that is we have to look at the fact that if someone is suicidal, fundamentally that is aggression. It's being directed inside. It's being directed to the self. But it is aggression. And eventually, that's going to need to come out the other way. But that is way down the line. If someone is actively recovering from a suicide attempt, we're not going to suggest healthy aggression work. But just to know, in the back of our mind, "Oh, okay, there's a lot of aggression in there that eventually is going to need to be supported." And it can be helpful for you, if this is you who is in this place, just to understand that. Like, "I've internalized a lot of aggression, which is why I tried to hurt myself." But it's really not about you. It's about what you experienced. And fundamentally, it's about the people that hurt you. That's where that aggression actually wants to go towards. Okay.

(00:53:35):

"I get lost in a no time state, and it's difficult to get myself out of there. I do all the basics to get a sense of the here and now. I worked with the kidneys today, and later fell asleep and had a dream of that sensation. I know it's a younger self-awareness of me that felt all the generational stuff as a kid and got so confused as there was no secure attachment. When I get sucked into the state, I get confused mentally and feel like I can't do anything about myself. Any thoughts or ideas?"

(00:54:11):

So the answer to this is the same as, in some ways, as to the previous one, which is it's about doing the basics, right? Yes, I feel like you're naming it really accurately. This younger self that just no one's there. No one is connecting to me accurately or appropriately, and that can leave us with no sense of self. Like, "Where am I if I don't have that reflection?" So, building connection with yourself, and start with the very basics. If you're in a state where you're actively in this kind of no time place, where am I, literally say, "Oh, I am at 235 Johnson Street in Apartment A in Delaware." I'm just making this up. But, "Yeah, this is my address." Say it out

loud. "I'm sitting on my sofa. Okay, yeah, here I am. I'm here. I'm real. I'm alive. This is my body."

(00:55:19):

Maybe there's a blanket, maybe there's containment. "Okay, right. Here I am. This is what's around me." Maybe you start with that. Rather than trying to connect to yourself right away, you connect again, what's something that's right there? Maybe it's just the candle two feet in front of you, like, "Ah, okay, that is real. That is here. Okay." Connecting to the environment, connecting to yourself.

(00:55:48):

Okay, a question about meditation. "When would somebody know when they're ready to experiment with sober meditation? What's the point, and how to learn to do it? What would be some red flags that starting a meditation practice is hindering or bypassing our healing, or if it's really helping our journey towards healing?"

(00:56:10):

So yeah, this is an important one because we sure get lots of messages about the importance of meditation these days. So what's the point? Indeed, what is the point? The original point of meditation was to increase one's ability to concentrate. And as one increases the ability to concentrate, one can become aware of more and more refined levels of reality and of oneself. So that's really the point. It's self-awareness and to increase one's refinement in their ability to perceive the universe. It's not really meant to be relaxing. Meditation is not supposed... It was never designed to be a zen relaxing practice. It was about discovery and finding what's inside. How do I tick? Improving concentration. It's hard.

(00:57:04):

So the first thing I would say is, you haven't seen it already, there's an interview called, on Irene's channel, called Meditation & Mindfulness 101. Definitely give that a watch. That's a great interview with Chris Dierkes, who is an experienced... Actually was a priest and did lots of meditation, and now works as a, he calls himself, I believe, a soul guide, a soul coach. Great guy. I've worked with him. Irene's worked with him. Really, really cool. Great interview about



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meditation and why, what's the point? Yeah, it's all about that. Why was meditation developed? Why do we want to do it? Why shouldn't we do it? So check that out.

(00:57:48):

In a nutshell, some signs that you may be ready to do it would be that you have the ability to handle intense emotion and sensation without getting overwhelmed, like you can feel that fidgety twitches, like pain or the muscle cramp, or the intense grief, or the anger, or the despair or the shame, and you can allow that stuff to move through, and you don't get overwhelmed. You can process it. You're fine. Maybe you're a little tired or whatever, but you can do it. You need to have that kind of capacity to handle that intensity of internal experience.

(00:58:24):

Many forms of meditation encourage you to sit absolutely still, like Vipassana. Again, that is way advanced, way, way, way, way advanced. So I would say one thing to consider if you're going into this is, well, you have permission to express. You don't have to be a statue just trying not to move a muscle. Can you give yourself permission to move, make sound, allow emotions to come out? You could view many of these neurosensory practices as a form of meditation for sure, but we're not actually asking you just to sit still and be a zombie. Allow yourself to express, allow yourself to move. That can be a really important part of it. So I do not recommend signing up for a 10-day Vipassana as your introduction into meditation.

(00:59:18):

But yeah, if you sense that you have that capacity to be with a fair amount of intensity on the inside, and you don't get overwhelmed and collapse afterwards, then maybe you're ready to start exploring it. But just be aware that maybe you need to break the rules a little bit of whatever it is you're being asked to do.

(00:59:35):

Some indications that are red flags that you shouldn't be doing it are if you start to tense up, brace, get really tight, get a headache, feeling overwhelmed in some way, and feel really emotional or collapsed afterwards. Or if you feel super high, like you feel blasted into spirit land, that's actually probably an indication that you're going into bypass and leaving your body.

Not the best thing. If you're feeling floaty or disconnected, if you're feeling numb, all of those are indications that like, no, not good. Don't do it. All right.

(01:00:17):

"Hi, Seth. Could you please talk about how to process the experience of being bullied and not being able to stand up for yourself at school and at home? I try to feel the memories, but I can't connect to the emotions."

(01:00:34):

So if you had an experience of being bullied and you can't connect to the emotions, it's just most likely because the system isn't ready yet. Those emotions are going to be really powerful and intense. Probably include shame, grief, rage, all sorts of big stuff. So don't worry about it. It'll come when your system is ready. And I would encourage you to start exploring it with posture, with boundaries. Boundaries, practically, especially, can start to make our system safe enough to allow this stuff to come.

(01:01:11):

So, for example, if you're in a relationship where you're still being bullied, well, time to end that relationship. Why would your system allow the content from the past bullying to come up if you're still experiencing it in some way? I'm not saying that's the case, I don't know, but it's something that is common. So we need to look at our relationships. We need to look at our practical boundaries. Am I creating a safe place for myself? Am I creating a safe home life? You start at that level. And then you sort of work your way in. What's my posture? The potent posture lesson is really powerful for this kind of stuff. What's it feel like to be in that potency? Can I imagine that starting to expand and radiate out as an energetic boundary?

(01:01:59):

You know those people that you walk by and you sort of feel like, "Whoa, don't mess with them"? That's someone who has a strong energetic boundary. So boundaries can be both practical, that we implement with our words and our actions, our behaviors, and that can be energetic, a sense of self that we radiate. That starts with our posture, with our connection to the ground, our connection to our spine, our connection to our internal world.

(01:02:29):

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Differentiation may be a useful starting place with something like this. So the old me you exercise, if you remember that from a previous call. Just me, you. And you can do this with a plant. You can do this with anything around you. Just feel me, this is me, you. That's you. Me, you. Feel what that's like. Maybe you combine that with potent posture.

(01:03:08):

Maybe you can start experimenting with, well, if you can't feel the emotions, can you imagine what you would've wanted to say? Maybe it's just no. What's it like to really feel your feet under you and just say a good no. Start with these ways, and then eventually the emotional content will come. Okay.

(01:03:33):

"I'm often blocked by feelings of fear, shame, and guilt. I experienced sexual traumatic events in adolescence and adopted a sense that something was bad about me, and a fear or feeling that I had to hide away this part of myself and its energy. As I do this work, any impulse that feels like I'm exerting energy, there's shame, guilt, or fear of letting it out, this bad energy, and that it would be harmful, and this is specific to feelings of sexuality or aggression. Any insight appreciated. I am navigating compassionately with an SE practitioner."

(01:04:09):

Great. So you already have one-on-one support. That's fantastic. So yeah, lean into that, of course. Now, of course, you probably know this already, but this is completely normal, if you've been abused, to think there's something bad about you. That is the adaptation that all young people make. So that's totally normal.

(01:04:32):

It sounds like one thing that could be useful is you say here, "I had to hide away this part of myself and its energy." Well, how might you start to have a relationship with that as your adult self? So that may mean bringing in your creative brain. When you say that, I really get a sense of like, well, where is it hidden? Where is that in your body? Where did you pack it away? Can you find it? Can you find that energy and that self that's in there? And start to relate to it using your creative brain. Like, what's the color of that energy you packed away? That self you packed away? Does it have a vibration? Does it have a texture? Is there an image to it? Is there

some way that it feels in your body? Where's the size? Where is it? These are all important inquiries that can be part of turning on the creative brain.

(01:05:37):

It doesn't matter if we even get an answer. It's the process of inquiry that's important. Because when we start asking these questions, we turn on our creative mind, and that turns down the voltage in those more primitive survival centers. And we can't be both dominated by survival and in our creativity at the same time. One starts to de-potentiate the other. So bringing in that kind of creative inquiry can be really helpful for this.

(01:06:08):

And yeah, maybe you don't want to do that because you sense, like you say, it's bad. Well, it's okay. Can you start to translate that into something more concrete? Yeah, maybe it looks like a pukey green color. Okay, well, that's not you. You're not pukey green. But you had to pack away this part of yourself, and it's been isolated for a long time. So, yeah, and it's sad. Oh my gosh. Maybe it's got this bad color to it. Understand that you're not bad, what happened to you was bad. So this part of you that's holding that, that feels like I'm bad, well, let's start to see maybe what that looks like. What sound does that part of you want to make? Blegh. What is it like? What is its experience like? These are all sorts of ways we can bring in that kind of creative mind.

(01:07:03):

Also, maybe just visualizing, if you're a visual person. Can you visualize yourself, as an adult, standing next to that energy that you packed away and just really holding it, giving it a big hug, letting it climb up onto your lap? Giving it a squeeze, wrapping it up in a blanket. You're okay now. You're here. You survived. You're with me and I'm with you. So developing that relationship with that part of yourself.

(01:07:37):

Underneath that, again, there's probably a part of you that's pretty darn pissed. We're not supposed to pack away parts of ourselves. What we do is survival. It's an adaptation, very useful, but we shouldn't have to do that. So eventually, again, just understand there's probably quite a bit of anger that may come out. And like you said, this tends to rise up when you're

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feeling sexuality or aggression, which are both in the sympathetic camp of things. So I think that's probably the best for now, is just finding different ways to build a relationship and to see that part of yourself. Find it somatically, find it visually. Yeah.

(01:08:37):

What time... Where are we at? Okay, great. 4:10. "Is it sometimes okay to let yourself go into a freeze response? I've been working with some grief, and I felt this pull towards freeze. I went down to the sea and connected to the environment. I felt into the activation, and I ran, and I expressed healthy aggression through sound. And I connected with friends, and I allowed the tears when they came. I used my resources to avoid freeze, but now I just really want to go floaty and spacey for a little bit." Absolutely. No worries. Go for it, yeah. Sometimes we need to. Actually, there's healthy forms of dissociation: daydreaming is something that I think probably all creatures do. I even had a cat, you'd see him, you're just like, "He's just checked out, man." That cat is not traumatized at all. Had a great childhood. I was there, but he's just sitting there, totally zoning out like, all right. Yeah, I think all creatures daydream and zone out a bit. There's nothing wrong with that, especially if you just did a bunch of good work like you're talking about. So yeah, no worries.

(01:09:47):

There's even a thing, our colleague Twig would talk about how he would do what he called for himself, a plan to collapse, or once he knew his system well enough, it's like he'd be like, "Oh, shit. Okay, I can tell my system's wanting to just fucking collapse, and so I'm going to carve out some time. I can see that this Friday and Saturday, I've got nothing going on. That's my time to collapse, and I'm going to do it," then do it. Great, no problem.

(01:10:25):

Okay. This one is, "Hard to say. Since SBSM, I'm spending hours during the day self-pleasuring myself. I live on my own. I'm single and isolated. It's the only thing I can get life energy from. Otherwise, I'm tired and fatigued. What is the nervous system relationship with sex and self-pleasure?" Really important question. So at its best in its ideal form, sex and sexuality is a combination of the sympathetic nervous system and the ventral vagal nervous system both happening together. So the sympathetic is necessary for arousal, for the excitement, and then the ventral vagal is about the connection. Now, of course, there's plenty of examples of not all sex being like that. There's plenty of sex out there that's just sympathetically driven, anger,



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fear: that's not so great. We want to have that ventral vagal connection as part of it. So if you're connecting with yourself, chances are that's what's going on, right?

(01:11:32):

You're engaged in something powerful and pleasurable that's under your control. That's one of the really important things about self-pleasure, masturbation, all of that. It's like, yeah, this is a powerful experience that feels good. That's about my body and it's under my control. Talk about the opposite of trauma. Trauma doesn't feel good and it's not under control, so nothing wrong at all with what you're doing. There are some things you may want to consider exploring, but orgasms are good for us. We get a lot of beneficial neurochemistry from that: you get oxytocin, you get dopamine, both of those counteract cortisol. So yeah, it's not really a problem. You may want to eventually explore different ways of relating to that sexual energy. That's the only thing I can really think of.

(01:12:32):

There's many ways to do this that can be really healing. The path that was really useful for me was the Daoist path of working with sexual energy. There's a book by Mantak Chia... Well, he's got several books, Mantak Chia, I'll put them in the replay section. You don't have to try to find them now, Mark. But one is for men, one is for women, one is for couples. He's written a bunch of books on this Daoist approach to working with sexual energy, and it's fundamentally about learning to run it through different channels, which are healing in different ways. So it was really useful as part of my world and my practice, and could be potentially useful for you as a way to try different ways to just explore sex and sexuality with yourself. I think that's it, yeah.

(01:13:36):

Okay. "I've noticed Team Lyon talks a lot about pruning relationships, ridding yourself of toxic relationships, et cetera as you do this work. Do you have more stories or examples of times when by doing this work relationships have gotten better healed, grown deeper?" Yeah, absolutely. So yeah, a couple of practical stories that I thought might be interesting to just see how this works. I cut off all communication with my dad for probably five, six years as part of my healing process, and then I actually reconnected before I got into the trauma work. I had done enough other kinds of work that I felt I was able to tolerate a relationship with him, but it was important to not see him or talk to him for a long time. Then something amazing

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happened as I started doing the trauma work after, I think it was probably about five years, four or five years in, I'd been doing a lot of work on healing my relationship with him.

(01:14:38):

Plenty of annihilation work, I destroyed him lots of times, and that changed my ability to feel love and compassion for him, made it much more accessible because I wasn't holding the hatred inside. Eventually, I noticed during this one visit, he just seemed softer. He seemed he was still the same guy, but he seemed softer in some way and actually then blew my mind by talking about when my brother died, my older brother who passed when I was a teenager, and he talked about how he had to make the decision to tell my brother, "It's okay to go," and he started crying. And I'm getting emotional right now just talking about it like, "Wow, I'd never seen any emotion from this man in my life." So yeah, magical stuff happens. As we do the work, it changes the field.

(01:15:42):

And he was sensing probably unconsciously that I didn't have all that resentment and rage towards him. So there was an opening for his vulnerability to come out. It's really beautiful. Another thing is with my sister, as part of my healing with my relationship with her, I ended the relationship basically for five, six years, couldn't do it, and then eventually reconnected and we did about a year, year's worth of facilitated work together with a good somatic experiencing practitioner. Now, she just left from her first visit here a couple weeks ago. She came up and was hanging out, and we have a good, solid, real, authentic relationship, which was never possible before. So yeah, sometimes we have to prune things, but that doesn't mean it's over forever, especially with family. Very often they're then, after we do our work and we heal ourselves, there's then room to heal the relationship, and it can happen in all sorts of ways. It can happen spontaneously, like I did with my dad. It can happen through working together, like I did with my sister. So, those are just a couple examples.

(01:17:05):

Okay, we've got about four more questions. Looks like we should be done in about 15 minutes. Of course, if you need to take a break, go away, feel free to watch the recording, all good. "I grew up in extreme neglect and abuse and didn't get out until I was 28 years old. I feel I'm completely debilitated with sabotaging myself though. I'm in the best place I've ever been. I am finally safe, but when I notice I'm sabotaging, I continue sabotaging. Doing the things I need to

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do seems too much. I feel like I take a step forward and then go back. I don't have executive functioning skills and basic self-care feels tortuous. I don't know what to focus on, so how do I move forward?"

(01:18:02):

All right, so growing up with neglect, abuse, and not getting out until you're 28. No wonder you're self-sabotaging. Of course, that's the only thing your system knows is for things to go badly. So, you're going to need to give yourself a huge freaking break here and understand that you can change this, but it's going to take time and the fact that you're engaging in self-sabotage is completely natural. It's what you're wired for at this point. So what you say here, I'm in the best place I've ever been. I'm finally safe. That is the first place to start is really, really consistently orienting to that and that old mantra I brought up at the beginning of the call with another question, "I'm alive, I survived and I'm here," that might be useful while orienting to the fact that you are alive, you are safe finally, you did it, you got out. Basics, basics, basics.

(01:19:12):

Then, I would say self-care is actually the next thing you want to focus on. If it feels torturous, that's the first thing to build. Much more important than going into a lot of fancy trauma work. Just learn your resources. What helps you feel a little better? What soothes you? Go back to researching your resources lesson if you need to. Just review that. What can you do that feels good? It may be really easy, like, "I am going to wear this thing because it's comfy. I'm going to do this because it's easy," finding ways of little bits, little bits. In this kind of case, this is an extreme case, you really need to start with the foundations, so that is what I would suggest focusing on. Just really consistently orienting to the reality of your safety, maybe combining it with those words, see if you can feel the sense of those words and using your resources: basic self-care, what helps you feel good.

(01:20:27):

Maybe there's some things that you know you should do that are good for you that you don't want to do that's part of the self-sabotage: just pick one to work on. I don't know what they are, but, "I don't want to brush my teeth," okay, well, I'm going to treat brushing my teeth as a neurosensory exercise, right? I'm going to, "Okay, oof, here's the toothbrush. Orient to the toothbrush. I'm here. I'm alive. I'm safe. Okay, this is my toothbrush. Here's the toothpaste. Ah,

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fuck, I don't want to do this. Okay, feel my feet under me. Feel my butt. Okay, I can do it." It may be that simple. Give yourself permission for it to be that simple. Just focus on those very simple things.

(01:21:29):

Okay, " Hello. I have a case of freeze starting in the womb, and I remember a pain that I was always afraid to feel. Now, through Reiki and other stuff, I connected more to me and there are still periods of time where I feel this subtle pain. It feels like a raisin shrinking, and it has to do with missing touch and connection I suppose. Never really goes away, although I try to stay with it to integrate it. How do you suggest I handle those periods of pain and why are they still there?" In terms of why they are still there, if you do not get the proper attunement and connection and care starting in utero and I'm assuming through childhood, well, that's a really freaking deep imprint, so it's going to take a while to change.

(01:22:18):

I think that this is fundamentally about building connection to yourself, which again is what every practice in the course is finding, different ways to build connection to yourself. But I highlighted this one because I think in this case it's possible that the diaphragm lessons that came out this week may specifically be useful because of this sentence, "It feels like a raisin shrinking." It's like, "Yeah, I can really feel that." It's like, "Oh, I'm not getting what I need and I'm just going to kind of shrivel up." The diaphragm lessons are opposite of that: they're about bringing expansion into different areas of the body. So, how might you imagine that as plumping the raisin back up, you're rehydrating the raisin through using these exploratory lessons of expanding into your bringing more space, bringing in juiciness, and then what might it be like to meet that expansion with your own touch.

(01:23:16):

So, maybe you're doing one of the diaphragm lessons and just do it as-is for a while, but then as you get into it, maybe you bring in your hands to the chest or whichever diaphragm you're working with. And then you feel that inside, outside connection, "I feel the breath meeting my hands. I can feel that expansion. I feel my hands touching the breath, touching the skin," so making that contact from the inside and the outside.

(01:23:53):

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Okay, two more, "I have a question about memory. I was sitting in class about child development and suddenly I was flooded with images from before I could walk and talk. I was underwater. I couldn't breathe. I was afraid of death, although I didn't have the word. Finally, I was taken out. A woman who didn't look at me picked me up. She was my mother. I knew I needed her to hug me to look at me, but she never did. How can this memory be explained?"

So most likely, this is not an actual memory: it is an archetypal representation of your early experience, which is a kind of memory. You're recalling experiences that came before you had memory making processes online in your brain, but the body always remembers everything, and it sounds like it has offered up this archetypal representation of your early experience, which really makes sense.

(01:25:03):

So your water, underwater water represents emotions in the dream world, in the archetypal world: you're underwater, you can't breathe, okay, you're being overwhelmed by emotions. So that could be very symbolic of just being a young person, not getting their needs met, feeling completely overwhelmed, not able to handle their experience or understand it: underwater, unable to breathe, scared of death, freeze response is coming on. Mother was there, but she's not there. So yeah, that's maybe the case: maybe your mom was physically present, but she wasn't there to connect to. There, but not there. It all makes a lot of sense.

(01:25:47):

It could also be maybe connected to your birth experience, being in a watery container and then your mother helped take you out, but then she didn't provide the kind of care and attunement attention, et cetera, that your system needed. So, this is a really great question because this is the kind of thing that can happen quite a lot as we get into this work and start to uncover these early, early layers if we had trauma there. They're very often represented by these types of archetypal representations, dream images, memories that seem impossible. It's very often that's what's going on.

(01:26:28):

Okay, last question, "I'm an SBSM alumni with a history of early trauma and shock traumas, and I have post-concussion syndrome. When I experience a flare-up with concussion symptoms, it seems to aggravate my entire nervous system, flaring up all my other conditions



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too. I prioritize rest and orienting, which really helps. But since my most recent flare-up three weeks ago, I can't seem to get out from under this dark, depressive, irritable cloud that mysteriously came on suddenly with the flare-up. Any suggestions?" So, I'll get to the suggestions in a bit, but I just want to highlight: when we have trauma and we have a series of injuries like this, it's not unusual for a flare-up from say, concussion syndrome to start to unpack survival energy. And it sounds like that's what happened here: your anger has surfaced. Now, I know you say it's dark depressive, but then you say it's irritable.

(01:27:32):

And again, what is depression? Depression is aggression that is pointed inwards. It's this, rah, and then we collapse around it. So, the fact that you can feel irritableness as well as the dark depression is actually a really good sign, I would say because it means that that energy is not only internally focused: it is actually starting to be felt as wanting to come out. Now, I don't recommend going straight into healthy aggression practices, which again come out next week and also are available on my site. I don't think you should go into those yet, especially if you're acutely in a state of flare-up or recently had one, because those are intense. But what I would say is that maybe start gently exploring mobilization of the musculature just to start warming up those pathways. So that could just look like, "Oh," doing little explorations with the jaw. Maybe it's much less than that, maybe it's just to start feeling, maybe with your hands, ah.

(01:28:58):

Or maybe feel, again, what's it like to just clench a little bit and let go, feel the energy, and let go, and then leave it. Little bits of starting to warm up those pathways for the aggression, because it sounds like it's starting to come out. Alternate that with tons of self-care, tons of soothing, tons of practices, whatever they are that help, like you said, the orienting and rest, that's really helpful. Great: do tons of that. Whatever lessons in the program help you soothe and settle and find softness within yourself, that would be the priority, I would say, the baseline, that rest, soothing, setting, settling. But then, little touches of visiting the musculature and the pathways that are associated with aggression so you start to give a little juice into those pathways.

All right, well there we have it. 1:30 on the dot. Right on. So thanks so much, everybody. As always, good to see you here and we will see you on the next call. All right, thank you, Mark. Thank you, Bonnie. Bye, everyone.