

Seth:

(00:00:02):

Okay, so just once more for the record, this is the final Q & A Call for SBSM 16. I'm here with our team members, Mara, in the chat. Hi Mara, thanks for being here. And also Ari, thanks for being here, Ari. Okay, and we'll get going.

So the first two questions were, it's interesting, they were both about using one's voice and I think that I'm going to answer them separately, because it's slightly different situations, but things that I say in either question could be relevant to both, essentially, but they're slightly different situations from the way I'm reading it. So the first one was, "Hello Seth. The voo exercise reminded me of voice exercises I unsuccessfully did in the past, and triggered an old insecurity of mine. The fact that I don't have a strong voice, my voice is constricted, and even the voo sound exercise seems too much at times."

(00:01:08):

"I feel like the voice is an important part of someone's personality and I would like it to be stronger and louder, but I feel a bit stuck and incapable. Do you have some advice?" So absolutely we want to consider maybe why our voice may be constricted. I certainly had an experience with this myself. I was in a children's theater when I was a young one and had a pretty horrifying experience of being asked to perform my song. We had all been asked to prepare songs to do with piano accompaniment, and I got asked to do mine on a day. I wasn't expecting it. I didn't have my sheet music, and ended up having to try to do it acapella up on the stage in front of the whole class, totally bombed it, total humiliation, shame, and up to that point I could sing, okay, after that, that was it.

(00:02:04):

I couldn't, my voice just closed up and I could speak, but if it came to singing, no way. So it took a long time to find the access to my voice, and it wasn't just about the mechanics, it was about working with the shame, the feelings of humiliation that the rage and anger at the music director who sprung it on me and made me go, even though I didn't have my music, there was a trauma there. I definitely went into a survival response, and it was stuck, and there was a lot that needed to be said and expressed from the throat. So that's one thing to consider. Given that you say you have these past exercises that were unsuccessful, is there anything in that

realm that's needing to maybe be addressed? Are there feelings of shame or humiliation or anger that maybe need to come out as part of this?

(00:03:05):

How might your voice be part of expressing those things? Also, just mechanically, a strong voice doesn't really come from the throat. It comes from the diaphragm and from how we breathe. So that was also a part of what I had to unlock. Now when we have a lot of grief, which can be part of shame and humiliation, and I had plenty of grief that was stuck, our diaphragm often will be very rigid and stuck in places, because there are these sobs that are wanting to happen, and when we sob, really let grief out the diaphragm, it's really moving, doing this up and down thing and that freeze it up. So there certainly was a lot of grief that I had to move as part of that. It's possible that's in the picture for you as well, but even if there isn't, I think it could be helpful to explore working with the diaphragms, particularly the respiratory diaphragm or literal diaphragm, and seeing if you can get a nice belly breath.

(00:04:16):

So that's where we obviously can't literally breathe into our belly, but when we are breathing well and the diaphragm is fully dropping, that pushes all the organs below the diaphragm out. So that's why it sort of seems like we're breathing into our belly, because the diaphragm is fully expanding down and it pushes everything out. So says breathing, can you find that expansion into the belly versus like that's up here breathing into the lungs, just expanding outward or upwards. This is very common when there's a lot of shock and held sympathetic energy in the system, is to breathe high in the lungs. So those are all things to consider exploring. If you do start finding that you can get a nice belly breath at some point, where usually it's in through the nose, and you're feeling this, you can put your hands on your belly, feel it expand.

(00:05:21):

Then maybe see what it's like to consider how you might let some sound come on the out breath. After getting that nice full inhalation, I can get some sound moving because there's that deep support from the diaphragm. So that's the first one. The second one, they say, "Hello Seth, I have functional neurological disorder, FND, and one of my many symptoms relates to my voice. If I'm nervous or stressed talking to new people or I feel I have to project my voice, then I struggle to talk and get my voice out. Then if I look at the person I'm talking to and realize they're struggling to hear me, it makes it even worse. Any advice would be greatly

appreciated. Thanks.” So everything I just said in the first one may also apply here. It's important to note that functional neurological disorder, that is essentially just the medical system saying, yeah, you're dysregulated, but we don't know what that means, so we're going to put this name on it.

(00:06:32):

If you look up FND, it basically just says a disorder of the nervous system without a clear cause. We don't know what's going on. That's dysregulation because they don't know about dysregulation. So it's a symptom of dysregulation and it absolutely can change. This is probably more indicative of early developmental trauma being in the picture, because when you do have these more syndromal representations like this or fibromyalgia or Crohn's or IBS, these things that we call syndromes, these are indications of a deep dysregulation where there's fight, flight and freeze all on at the same time. No system is sure which system is boss and the wires are crossed, and so that's essentially what's at the root of the functional neurological disorder. So everything I said in the first one applies, but it may be that you also really need to focus for a while on building core capacity, building safety, review the early trauma tips, a handout in the additional resources review, the FAQ in the most frequently asked questions page, where it says I have early developmental trauma.

(00:07:57):

What are the best practices for supporting parasympathetic downregulation? That has a list of all the practices that generally speaking are a good menu to select from for early developmental trauma, for building capacity, for supporting the ability to just kind of feel okay. Because when you have a more extreme representation like FND, there is probably going to be a need to do a more gradual building of the baseline, just getting to feel a little bit more in the world in general. So there's that, and then some things you could play with in the moment, because I hear you saying that this happens, especially when I'm talking to new people. Of course that makes sense because your sympathetic system will be firing, because you're already holding that energy.

(00:08:55):

If you find yourself in this situation where you're talking to someone who you don't really know that well, a new person, can you focus on the basics of this work? Just the bare minimum of are you breathing? Can you feel your feet on the ground? Can you maybe tap into some

element of noticing potent posture? Maybe it's not fully the moment to go in, but can you just notice, am I standing? Are my legs under me? Are my feet on the ground? Can I feel the support from the earth? Do I feel stable? These are all things that you can check in with fairly quickly. Maybe it means you pause before you speak, which may seem weird, but it might be a better option, to give yourself a moment where you can just sort of wait a second. Okay, I'm breathing, I am feeling my feet.

(00:09:58):

Okay, I'm going to speak. Just, sorry, one second. I'm just going to turn off my chat previews. There we go. So I think that's mostly it. Another thing you could explore as sort of a warm up, though it may feel weird to do is try everything I was just talking about with yourself in a mirror, just making eye contact with yourself. Can you still breathe? Can you still feel your feet? What's it like to speak to yourself? Can you do that? And notice these elements of basic connection with the environment. Those are some ideas to try in the moment. Fundamentally, I think that it comes down to more of the big picture though, of doing this work to restore regulation over time, so that the symptoms of that syndrome of FND can resolve. Alright.

(00:11:02):

Great.

(00:11:12):

Okay. "Hi there. I've been sitting with two questions. One, how much wellness am I willing to receive? Two, if I didn't have CFS/ME, how would I want my life to look/be? The first one arose from a mod saying we need to titrate goodness sometimes, and noticing how I can have short periods of happiness, but then symptoms rapidly arise. The second came from asking, how is CFS/ME keeping me safe? Material answers to the second are easy, but answering it honestly from the heart is hard. How to feel safe with true wellbeing, and how to find what that is for me." So this is not unusual. I know that the person who's asking this has been around and doing our programs for a while, and is making slow and steady progress. So congratulations also, as an older student, and it's just really important to remember and really have compassion for yourself. The longer you've been living with dysregulation, the more fearful it can seem to have something else, even something much better. So this is fundamentally about a fear of the unknown, and you have no frame of reference for what true well being would feel like. It sounds good, but it's totally different from what you've been living with. And in any

traumatized system, that which is unknown will create a signal of danger, a little ping of danger into the system, even if it's something good. So that's fundamentally, I believe, what's going on here.

(00:13:09):

I think that there's an important point to what the other moderator said, in that it is important to titrate our goodness. Sometimes this is especially true if someone's coming from a background of chronic fatigue, where we may do our good work for a while and start to feel a little bit better, and maybe we wake up one day and realize we have energy. There can be a temptation like, oh my gosh, this is amazing. I'm going to go to the grocery store and I'm going to get my hair done and I'm going to go for a walk around the park and I'm going to. Then you end up doing way too many things because all of a sudden you can, and then boom, your system crashes. So it is really important if we're coming from a background of being chronically fatigued, that we do have awareness about, like, okay, I am feeling a little bit better.

(00:14:03):

I need to put that into savings, not spend it in my checking account right away. So we want to bank that energy as we feel a little bit better. We don't want to use it necessarily, use it a little bit, but it's like how can you imagine little feelings of goodness, little feelings of improvement, just being celebrated for what they are in the moment and visualize that as like, oh, okay, this energy is now in me. I feel a little better. Maybe I can see that sort of repairing my cells, and I can envision my wires just getting a little faster and a little sparkler, and just sort of imagine how the inner housekeeping might be happening a little better rather than putting it all into action. So that would be my inquiry for you, is how can you discover small elements of well being from moment to moment, and just celebrate them as you notice them, and really not think that you need to all of a sudden find true well being, or imagine what that might be like that, it's something you can discover, and I believe you will continue to discover from moment to moment, if you can take the pressure off of yourself.

Ari:

(00:15:29):

Yes, sorry to interrupt, but I see that you're recording locally instead of to the cloud. I dunno if you saw my message, I wanted to see if it was intentional.

Seth:

(00:15:38):

That was not intentional. Thank you so much for letting me know. Let me, let's see.

Ari:

(00:15:45):

And then you start yours.

Seth:

(00:15:46):

Yeah, I started it. Cool. Awesome. Thanks Ari. Thank God for Ari. That's why we have her here. We make mistakes. Thank you. Okay. All right.

Okay, moving on to the next one. "At work, I can stay fairly regulated when doing boring or routine work. When working with something engaging that makes me curious, I get activated with both freeze and high intensity, especially when having to relate to colleagues. How can I work to uncouple engagement and relationships, positive things with high activation, I don't have the capacity to titrate, it just happens in other areas of my life. It happens less often than before, is just more time and capacity building needed?" So yes, that's the quick answer. Yes, you just need more time and more capacity. There's things you can focus on to help speed that along. So I think there may be ways that you can titrate this just by exploring elements of this not in the workplace.

(00:17:07):

So is there something that engages your curiosity and excitement that you can explore at home? I don't know what that might be, but is there something that brings a similar response of excitement? Because what's happening here is the sympathetic system. It governs both fight, flight and also just excitement. If we're really excited, we're in more sympathetic arousal when there's a history of having the fight flight and the danger signals, we can get excited about something, and then it just triggers the fight flight, because that is a well worn groove in the sympathetic. So yes, your system needs to learn how to differentiate between a positive

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sympathetic charge versus a charge that's telling you to run for your life or fight. So exploring that kind of thing in your home might be one to check that out, my own way to check that out. Pay attention to a few different things.

(00:18:13):

Now, this would be, in either case, if you notice this happening at work or if you're exploring it at home, I would say how can you focus on staying present, and again, sort of the basic ways can you feel the sense of excitement, and can you still feel your feet? If you can do this at home, it might be more possible to titrate as you start to go into something you're excited about, and then you stop it and you notice, am I breathing? Am I bracing or holding anywhere? Can you keep your throat and your jaw soft while feeling a sense of excitement? Can you think about the kidneys being down, et cetera? So seeing if you can pay attention to elements of parasympathetic oriented stuff like this when the excitement is coming. Another way to do this is actually just with exercise. A way to spike the sympathetic system that is a totally different context that has nothing to do with work or engaging your mind in a curious way.

(00:19:24):

Just can you spike your sympathetic? Can you get your heart rate up, but still notice connection to the ground? Still notice are you breathing? Is your throat soft? Is your jaw soft? Can you feel your feet? Can you feel your legs? So those are some good somatic cues to pay attention to, and there's a few different ways you could explore spiking up that sympathetic in different contexts, and then paying attention to see if you can notice these elements of groundedness and connection with the environment. Essentially, it sounds like what's going on is you get curious and excited at work, and then you're losing connection with yourself and the environment, because this charge is taking over. So it's like how can you train your system to stay connected to yourself and the environment as the heart rate gets faster, as the breath gets a little bit faster, as that sympathetic energy comes in?

(00:20:35):

“Hi, I find it hard to connect with people. I recently had painful breakups with partners and friends, and became even more socially anxious. It manifests as feelings of worthlessness. There are episodes of desperation when I crave connection more than ever, but I feel safest alone. I'm confused. Am I supposed to go through it on my own or in hard moments reach for connection. I feel when reaching out in desperation, I usually end up feeling abandoned. I want

to attract, not chase. Thanks.” Okay, so big picture wise, the resolution to this, the ultimate resolution is going to be about building a safe, attuned relationship and connection with yourself, because like you say, I want to attract not chase. The way we attract that which we want is by cultivating it within ourselves. That is kind of how it seems to work. If otherwise, we are trying to fill a hole and that doesn't work out too well.

(00:21:44):

That's trauma bonding because then we find someone and where we need them, they need us and we're filling in for the other person, these sort of missing pieces, and that is pretty messy, and usually it's not sustainable if we want to attract right relationships for us, we have to have right relationship with ourselves. So I actually wouldn't say that there is a hurry here to find a connection. If you feel safer alone, then great, that's good. Not everybody has that gift of feeling safe alone. So I would say that it is probably okay to do this work mostly alone, and to focus on all the ways you can build authentic, attuned connection with yourself, and how can you deepen that and deepen that such that you start to resolve the wounds that are sort of fueling the desperation. So that's one perspective on that, where you say, I feel when reaching out in desperation, I usually end up feeling abandoned, because that sounds like you're reaching out from a place of a lot of survival, and so that's going to trigger the survival energy in anyone else that you're reaching out to.

(00:23:05):

It's going to feel like too much pressure, and they're going to go into their stuff. So one thing to consider is there are quite a few telephone services, crisis lines that could be really useful in this context. Often those are focused around suicidality and more intense feelings of self-harm, but they don't have to be. You can use those lines just if you're feeling desperate and alone and you need connection, because they are people who, on the other end of that line, who are trained to be there, in and with your desperation, and they're not going to get overwhelmed and go into their own stuff. They know how to be with someone when they're feeling desperate. So that's something to consider. What would it be like to find out your, whatever crisis line number works for you? There's a bunch on the SBSM website, and if you're feeling this desperate need for connection, call a professional who actually knows how to hold space for that.

(00:24:14):



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It's also possible that in the same vein of things, working with a practitioner, that's another way to explore finding a safe connection. Even if you're feeling this desperation and or fear of connection working one-on-one with a practitioner, that's a big part of it a lot of the time, and that was certainly for me. I didn't feel safe with people at all. Yeah, I took a while with my practitioner to really feel safe with him. It's very valuable. We, of course, can do so much on our own. Many people get back to regulation and health without needing to see a practitioner, just by working with these practices, building their relationship with themselves, building the connection with themselves, exploring their system, releasing the trauma, et cetera, and sometimes it's helpful to have support, especially if there is this paradigm of wanting connection and being afraid of it at the same time, which is not unusual, by the way.

(00:25:17):

That's a pretty common hallmark of unresolved trauma. So I think that's about it for that one. It's good that you can feel safe alone. Don't feel like you have to find a connection. You can use these practices in your education to keep on building a stronger and stronger, safe, attuned connection with yourself and your inner world and your immediate environment, and it may be useful to find some support, but a professional support either on a crisis line or a practitioner, rather than bringing that sort of desperate need to friends and family members, which usually doesn't work out.

“Hello, I have had early developmental trauma recently. I've been feeling a massive influx of curiosity and creativity, a yearning to explore childhood dreams and bring them to life. My chest is about to explode and my system isn't ready for it. I feel very disorganized, terrified, confused, brain fog and collapse will follow. Every time I attempt something, I don't know how to break the process into realistic, actionable steps, which causes me to abandon everything.”

(00:26:23):

“I feel so frustrated, and being alone in it doesn't help.” Okay, so this is actually really, really positive. The fact that you're feeling a massive influx of curiosity and creativity and a yearning to explore childhood dreams and bring them to life, that is wonderful. And what does that tell us? That tells us that you are doing a very good job of building connection to that inner you, and this younger you that probably got stuck in their development, and you're making connection to that energy, that physiology, that psyche, that part of yourself. It's coming alive in you, and so you're feeling these feelings associated with this younger self of excitement, curiosity,

creativity, fantastic. Just let that be enough. Don't try to make it happen yet. That's putting way too much strain on your system right now. It's about celebrating the aliveness of that experience itself, celebrating the feelings of curiosity, of creativity, of desire in themselves.

(00:27:30):

Let those be enough for now. If you try to implement it, that's going to be way too much, because this part of you is new and emerging. So it's about connecting to the feelings, cultivating those feelings. Where are they in your body? Literally, what part of your body is lighting up? Can you focus on that? Can you breathe with it? Can you help it make a sound? Maybe work with the feelings and the desires themselves, the felt sense experience, help it be celebrated. What might be the words that want to be said from that place or the sounds that might be made? What are the movements that could come from this sort of creative energy coming through? Those are all things I would encourage you to explore, and don't feel like you have to actually do anything yet.

(00:28:26):

One thing to consider specifically from SBSM again is the diaphragm lessons, because it sounds like, where you say, my chest is about to explode and my system isn't ready for it. It sounds like you're feeling a lot of excitement and possibly even joy, but it feels like too much, and again, that can be because there's constriction in the containers of the body, the diaphragms. So I encourage you to revisit the diaphragm lessons and maybe even explore the advanced diaphragm lesson that puts 'em all together, which I believe is in lab nine. All of those would be worth exploring, just to see what it's like to bring in more space literally into the chest, into the containers of the body at some point. Because what we want to have happen is for your system to be able to hold the energy of this excitement without going into overwhelm right now, trying to figure out how to actually do stuff is too much, too emergent.

(00:29:32):

It's too new. So celebrate the feelings. Know that later you can work on implementing. When you do get to that stage, it'll just be about what is the first step, and then you do the next one. That's how you break this stuff down. It can be helpful to write it out even. Maybe that's the first step, right? But say, okay, I want to write a book, and you have all these ideas. What's the very first step? Well, the very first step is to get out my paper and my pen and just put them there on the desk. Great. Or open up my laptop, create my Word document. It's there. Great.

Done. Step one, step two, maybe I'll think about a title or maybe I'll just write that. Maybe I'll just write my author name. Leave it like tiny little steps, but don't, don't even think about going near that yet. Just work with a feeling.

(00:30:42):

Okay. "In the context of healing toxic shame, I have access to these visceral qualities of retching, et cetera, at random moments, but also around specific people. Conversely, I've had others access these qualities around me, particularly when I've discussed heavy emotional topics. A friend may start to retch or dry heave. How do you know when this is your own shame imprint or something you're processing versus absorbing and feeling someone else's energy and processing for them?" Just a moment. The first thing I'll say is you can't process for somebody else. You can certainly pick up on what's happening in someone and express it, but that's not going to process anything for them. The only way to process stuff is to do it yourself. So that's the first thing to know. The other thing is how do you know when it's your stuff or if you're absorbing from somebody else?

(00:31:54):

It's always your stuff, is the easy answer, because if you are empathetically attuning to someone, and the result is that you go into an expression of retching or dry heaving, that's because what they are working with is also in you. You wouldn't have such a visceral response if it wasn't applicable to you and your history and your physiology and your psyche as well. So if it's having this it is creating this strong visceral response, maybe being around them is activating it, but it's still your stuff. If you didn't have material that was resonant or if they didn't have that which was resonant with you, the response would be maybe compassionate, but it would be much more economical. It would be like, yeah, oh, I feel for you, but I'm not retching in sympathy. So that's pretty much it for that. Another thing that I'll say is that we've talked about this a lot in the practitioner training that Irene is running, about the difference between attunement and empathy.

(00:33:13):

Empathy is a tricky one because it's important. It's largely missing in many cases from our world. It would seem, that being said, when we are working through our own trauma, empathy is actually kind of dangerous, because we may have a history of being hyper empathic, hyper attuned. There's a question later on that gets to this, where we are constantly feeling into

everyone and everything around us, which actually puts more strain on our system. Sometimes we need to learn how to be less empathic in the context of this work. As a practitioner, it's very important to learn to be attuned to the field rather than empathizing with the person. When we empathize with a person as a practitioner, we're too in their stuff. Essentially, the basis of doing this work well is being able to read and feel what's happening in the other person. But we do this by attuning to the field in the room.

(00:34:25):

Ideally, it's a subtle difference. It's hard to explain, but it's kind of like you're reading the vibes rather than feeling what's in the other person's gut. It's a slight difference, and that's what sounds like it would be useful here as well. How can you back off a little bit with the empathy, and be more like, I'm just, I'm feeling the room and what's here. I'm not zeroing into you and your system. That is what I believe is setting off these pings of resonance and going into this retching, which is okay, but ultimately maybe not that useful. So working with boundaries, the idea of energetic boundaries, working with, how can I dial down the amount which I'm feeling into other people?

(00:35:22):

Okay. "Hello. So I have worked through a lot of shock trauma and early developmental trauma, and it's been a very stormy road. From the training call, I picked up a new insight. If I scratch my skin, which I do since I was a kid with chronic eczema, I activate my sympathetic nerves. It's been so grooved into my system for almost five decades, and I wonder what more I can do on top of continuing SBSM to reverse my deeply grooved survival impulse to scratch, specifically and specialized around touch?" For sure. I think that what this comes down to is exploring different qualities of touch, simply enough. So there's so many ways in which we can explore touch.

(00:36:12):

There's what it would be like just to work with the holding feeling, just a firm hold instead of a scratch or a stroke, sort of a gentle movement. What would it be like to squeeze a little bit, sort of palpate, and not just with an area where you would itch, that's itchy everywhere, like areas that are not itchy, just squeezing the body, palpating, contacting, saying, hello, stroking, some of Elia's Qigong lessons, in the movement. His lessons have elements of this that could be really good. So that's really it. Change the quality of how you touch. Change the intention with

how you touch working with the layers. The layers lesson. How can you pay attention and touch deeper than the skin, right? If you're scratching, that's very much skin level. So how might you start working with what's underneath the skin, the fascia, the muscle, the bone?

(00:37:23):

These are all different ways you can start exploring different ways to make contact with yourself. What might it be like to explore the touch of consciousness itself? The touch of awareness, which is when you go internal and maybe you notice the area that you would normally scratch, you feel it from the inside. You swim your attention up to that spot like a little fish and say hello from the inside with your awareness. There are so many ways that we can explore this idea of touch. So I would encourage you to do that. Explore all the different ways in which you can have a different quality, different intentionality to your touch, and working with areas of the body that are different than those that you may habitually scratch, and maybe ping ponging or pendulating between different spots.

(00:38:27):

Okay, "Hi. My legs feel exhausted and achy. Often I get the sense sometimes that my legs are or they literally feel frozen. Two things I'll mention. One, I've had injuries in the left ankle and right knee. When I lay on my stomach, I get the sense of being dragged by my legs. I feel terror and helplessness. I feel this is flashing me back to something I know, and oh, I feel like this is flashing me back to something, and I know I have EDT. What can I do when my legs feel frozen or withered? What is the wisest way to work with a stored trauma here?"

(00:39:07):

So a few things. There's many ways you can explore working with the legs. One thing I wonder is, if there is an impulse in there to kick at all. So mobilization is the key here. I feel terror and helplessness. So that is a state of usually immobility, of feeling helpless, of not being able to move, or feeling like you're being dragged. So how might your legs want to mobilize? How is there an impulse to kick away whatever is dragging you? If there is not an impulse, what would it be like to explore the motion of that anyway, but in a very Feldenkrais and intentional kind of way? So that doesn't mean that all of a sudden you start kicking like mad. You feel this sense of your legs. They feel this sense of being withered or frozen. Okay, if I were to imagine I was going to kick one of my legs, which leg would I kick?

(00:40:19):

Okay, I'm feeling I would kick the right one. Okay. If I were to kick my right leg, what's the first thing I would have to do in order to do that motion? Well, I guess I would have to draw my leg up. Okay, how do I initiate that movement? Okay, I guess I would start by thinking about my knee coming closer to my chest. Okay, what's it like to do that? Breaking it down into little bits, little moments of exploration, this Feldenkraisian lens of movement, where it's about exploring, how do you do what you do? That would be a very careful and titrated gentle way to start exploring mobilization within the legs.

(00:41:10):

Another thing to consider is how else might you want to mobilize? Is there some way the arms are wanting to move to protect you or to grab onto something? Perhaps? Is there some way in which your body wants to move? And if there isn't, then again, it's like, okay, because it may be that you can't contact an innate impulse yet, if there's a lot of freeze there, those impulses, which I'm sure are there, there's going to be sympathetic self-protective response wanting to happen, but they may be deeply buried. So use your mind, just imagine, well, if someone was dragging me by the legs, what would I want to do? What would it make sense to do in that situation? And then explore those movements, those possibilities from this very intentional Feldenkrais kind of way.

Yeah. Okay. Let's take a little pause, take a little five minute break just to go to the bathroom, or get water or tea or anything like that. It's 3:45, so yeah, we'll be back, maybe not a full five minutes. Be back here three or four minutes and we'll just pick it right up. See you then. All right. Okay. And we're back. Great.

(00:46:49):

"I've had migrating body pain for almost 20 plus years, since a knee surgery. It moves between my knee, IT band, butt, hips, mid back, right shoulder, cranial brainstem. I've had shock and early developmental trauma. Things have improved with seasons of zero or minimal pain with Feldenkrais, and SBSM two times, and other modalities for the last 10 years. In the last three weeks, I've been having another round of frustrating hip, butt, left leg pain. Any suggestions for how to work with this, especially when in the hip region?"

(00:47:26):

So this migrating pain, that's very common. It is kind of like fibromyalgia. I mean it is similarly described. There's a few things you could consider exploring from within SBSM. One thing that comes to mind is, again, the Feldenkraisian exploration, in general. Specifically, I'm thinking of the rolling like a baby lesson. That could be a really interesting one for working with. When there's pain in these parts of the legs and the hips, it's something you're really going to want to titrate. So be aware and don't try to do the big movements or anything necessarily. Just really go at your own pace, take it slow, but that rolling like a baby lesson is a lot about working with those areas. You mentioned another one, the bell hand lesson. This is very, totally different, the bell hand. Like a baby is working directly with the areas that you're talking about.

(00:48:30):

Bell hand is working with a totally different area. However, the bell hand lesson tends to bring softness into the whole system, and it also can be frustrating for people sometimes, because it's a very refined thing. The bell hand is really powerful though for many people as well. So it could be worth exploring, because it does tend to bring a very soft, gentle tone through the whole system, which actually might be part of mitigating the pain that you're experiencing, which is probably more connected to tension in either the fascia or the musculature. So that can be interesting to explore. Also, in regards to the hips, whenever you're feeling anything in the hips, notice what your jaws are doing, because there's a big connection between the jaws and the hips. There are two sorts of primary hinge points, and they work together. If there is tension in the hips, there is tension in the jaws, and vice versa, almost always. So that is another thing to explore as you're feeling this in the hip, ah, what's happening up here, and how might you explore movements in there? Pendulation, of course, noticing areas that aren't hurting, going back and forth, finding the painful and the pleasant. That lesson could be very useful for working with this.

(00:50:02):

And also the touch the layers lesson, again, can be really helpful to get into the fascia layer, when you have this sort of migrating pain, and really learn to speak to your fascia and help it soften and feel a sense of connection. Those are all things you could explore. Rolling like a baby bell hand. Those are both, I believe, from lab nine, and finding the painful and the pleasant lesson. Working with the touch lesson, the layers lesson, all of that could be potentially helpful.

“I recently experienced short regressions into very early developmental trauma up to the horrors of my birth. Then white light or any touch of cold or sound feels unbearable,” which makes a lot of sense. As that was the case for many of us in our birth, unfortunately, was coming out into this very bright, white, hard, cold kind of environment. “I tend to lose my body warmth through the belly, and the only thing I want is crawling into fetus position, darkness and warmth. How to deal with this?”

(00:51:23):

All right. So I would say the way to deal with that is to do it. Give yourself full permission to explore crawling into a fetus position with darkness and warmth. I would encourage you to set yourself up with resources beforehand. So really make this intentional, how to put on some music that you like, that is soothing and calming. Maybe you have some gentle lights that are very warm and in their tone, or candle light, right? Very soft, light, creating an environment that is very much like what you're desiring. Turn the heat on, get it warm, in there. Have a really pleasant environment, and once that is set, go ahead and crawl into your fetal position and just get a big blanket over you. Maybe put pillows up against your back and your sides, and just hang out in the darkness and the warmth in that position, and then you can see what it's like from there to start to make little forays into the world. So maybe it starts by just, you start to orient a bit to these lovely things that you've set up around you beforehand. A candle flame or a warm light, or the sound of it could be a sound of running water, like a stream or the ocean or rain sounds, or maybe it's music. That's something that you like. How can you start to orient these lovely things in your environment from this place of safety, being curled up in the warmth, in the dark?

(00:53:07):

It's kind of like the idea of rebirthing in some ways, recreating the conditions and then giving yourself permission to really have time to emerge into a much more pleasing environment, a much more supportive, gentle environment. The only other thing I can think of is if there's a very safe person that you have in your life who you trust to have with you, that could be useful and supportive as well, or not, maybe it's better just to explore on your own from a very well-resourced place in general. That's a good way to go when we're getting these impulses like, oh, I just want to do this. Yeah, just do that and see what it's like to explore that from the inside, and then slowly emerge into the wider world. Give yourself time if you do this. Don't



have anything else planned the rest of the day, so you have time to integrate and process whatever may happen.

(00:54:21):

Okay. "My husband is supportive and slightly interested in my work with SBSM. He has been through trauma himself. Sometimes being physically close to him, I feel jittery, unsettled, or speedy inside when this happens, the feelings feel too big to manage internally. I blame my husband. Can I be feeling my husband's unsettled feelings? How do I manage this? I spent my childhood trying to keep my father from exploding with rage towards my mother. All the best." So this is the one I was referring to earlier when I said, we're going to get to this kind of hyperactive empathy, attuned empathy.

(00:55:06):

What's going on here? So you spent your childhood trying to keep your father from exploding with rage towards my mother. How would you do that? You would've been attuned to his system, so you would've been aware of what's going on with dad all the time, so that I can make sure I know, so that I know how to respond, so that I can keep everyone safe. So when you were growing up, you were hyper attuned, hypersensitive to your male primary attachment figure. Your husband is now your male primary attachment figure, and it sounds like you are hyper attuned to him and also maybe projecting some of your experience with your dad onto him, and that you're blaming him, or feeling annoyed with him, because of the feelings you're feeling. So that's probably why this is happening. Also, it sounds like he probably does have his own work to do, so that is something to consider. How might he get more interested?

(00:56:17):

It's something we run into a lot with couples, where one of them gets into the work, and I've heard this over and over again also in training with practitioners. Oh, my husband's really supportive, is really supportive of me coming here and doing this, or, yeah, he's really supportive of my work. That's good. And I've seen that if someone keeps going forward and getting deeper into this work, and yet both people need it, sometimes that gets quite difficult. It can be unsustainable as one person gets more and more regulated, because what tends to happen as we get more regulated is we have less tolerance for being close to people who are not. We also have more capacity to do that. So that's really useful in the world because I mean,

that's generally the reality of our world, is that a lot of people are dysregulated, but that's different when it's our primary person in our home.

(00:57:30):

It can get quite difficult to stay in those relationships if one person is working to become regulated and the other is not. So that is something just to be aware of in these moments, what to do. It is really about differentiating. I think that you're, internally, it sounds like your system needs to differentiate that your husband is not your father. You don't have to be so hyper attuned to his system. You're not a little girl anymore. So how might you, in these moments, differentiate communication is going to be an important part of this. Maybe naming this, speaking about it, especially when you're not feeling it so much, saying like, Hey, I've noticed that sometimes when I'm around you, I'll start feeling jittery and I'm not sure why that is. It could just be me, or I think it's possible, I'm also feeling you. I don't know, and I'm going to work to differentiate that.

(00:58:36):

So what that might mean is when you're noticing this, maybe then you need to take some space and that needs to be primed. So it's not like you're sitting with him and you start feeling these things and you're getting annoyed, and then you just get up and leave and then he's like, oh, what the hell? And it can create a rift. So that's why it's good to communicate and talk about this stuff. Also communicating and talking about it will be an important thing to notice. And how does your husband respond to that? Can his support continue when he starts getting involved in terms of like, Hey, I'm feeling this around you. I'm wondering, he's going to be more in the picture then what's his response to that? But yeah, it's about differentiating, and then it's about working with those jittery, unsettled feelings when they arise.

(00:59:33):

Part of what was making it feel like it's too much it sounds like is because there's this undifferentiated place where there's a part of you that still thinks it's your dad and he's about to scream at your mom. So differentiation, naming for yourself that this is my husband, not my dad. Having that communication between the two of you, it's like, Hey, I, I'm feeling that thing. I need to get up and just get a little space and do some of my practices. That will be important to do. It'll be important to see how he responds to that. And yeah, hopefully he starts to get more interested in this work for himself if he needs it, which it sounds like he may.

(01:00:24):

All right. I just wanted to clarify something that I saw in the chat. Differentiating between attunement and empathy. How do you hold yourself in front of that in the presence of the other? So this is really advanced stuff. It's something, like I said, we're talking about with our practitioners who are learning to do this work for other people. It's a very subtle difference, and it's hard to describe, but fundamentally, it's like if I am hyper attuned, which is essentially my empathy is coupled with survival energy, it's like this super radar, radar that's just scanning, scanning all the time. It's like you're feeling into the other person. So how might you imagine that your attention is just coming away? How might you think about, maybe, you think about your skin getting thick, like the bark of a tree or that you have a bubble around you. There's different ways that you could imagine it, but it's a pulling back, pulling back your attention. It may be something that you can't really do until you resolve the survival energy and get more regulated first. Because like I said, this is a very subtle distinction. So it may be that there needs to be some more heavy lifting done first to get some of that survival energy out of the system.

(01:02:04):

Alright, "I grew up in a home where hobbies, physical activity and personal expression and socializing were deemed unnecessary, if not dangerous. I have in my adult life come up with interesting ideas that could turn into a career or business, but I have no motivation to manifest them. I have no strong enough desire about anything, and now I have all this nervous system education, my mind is reasoning, you can never pull this off."

Anyway, so what's going on here is these are all indications of shut down, which completely makes sense, given how you grew up. No motivation to manifest thinking, I can never pull this off. I have no motivation to do it. That's all. Shut down, collapse stuff. And it's because when you were growing up, these very fundamental aspects of human experience were repressed or even more seen as actively dangerous, when they're incredibly important. Physical activity and personal expression and socializing, those are huge three primary things for human health and development that without, of course, your system's going to go into shutdown because you're not getting nourished with what you need growing up. So this completely makes sense. So again, big picture, just keep on going. And what happens is you need to cultivate your sympathetic energy and your ventral vagal capacity, because these are the things that would've been stunted growing up like that. I'm sorry to hear about that by the way too, because that's really tough.

(01:03:51):

In terms of specific things, the things I'm zeroing in on first when I'm looking at this physical activity and personal expression, socializing can be a bit trickier. So starting with things that you can focus on just in the venue of your own experience, physical activity and personal expression, how can you start doing more of those things? Just move more, get your heart rate up, go for more walks, maybe start doing moderate to intense exercise of some kind. Do Elia's movement lessons. Start discovering how you can cultivate your ability to find pleasure in movement. Now, this may involve some element of fake it till you make it. I also grew up with zero emphasis being placed on physical activity. I didn't do it until I met Irene, and she basically made me, because she was very physically active, I didn't have the innate sense in me of, I want to move, I want to exercise.

(01:05:06):

I didn't have a connection to that feeling good. It just felt like work. It felt boring, it felt like a slog, but I made myself do it anyway year after year, and by, I would say, the second year, maybe the third, I started to actually notice that feeling that people talk about, like, oh, this is what is meant by a runner's high. I wasn't running, but same deal. I started to get the felt sense of the joy of movement, of how the body innately wants to move and be active and feel that. But I had to use willpower to get there. So you may have to do that as well. Of course, please be mindful of your capacity, if that is the case, that you have to build your ability to notice the enjoyment of movement. But it sounds like that's going to be really important, because one, it's going to start spiking up your sympathetic energy.

(01:06:07):

It's going to start perking that up in a healthy way. That's not about trauma work necessarily, although exercise can bring stuff up. So be aware of that. But it sounds like that's going to be really important to just get more blood flow, more vitality in the system, and to start building your ability to enjoy movement and personal expression, that is also incredibly important. So how can you start to explore that? One way to think about this might be, if you can even remember, what are some of the things that got repressed when you were a kid? What are ways you wanted to be silly or to be vivacious with your energy? What are faces you might want to make, sounds you might want to make? How could you be silly? How could you give yourself permission to do that? Like our little friend here on the screen?

(01:07:05):

How might you be silly? What might it be like to work with a mirror, to look into a mirror and just be like, blah, what's it like to make faces? That's stuff you may want to play with. What might it be like to start to see your face move in different ways, to hear yourself make sounds? What are words that might want to be said? Maybe this leads to some anger, which again is going into that sympathetic energy. So I'll encourage you to explore and to play with these elements of physical activity and personal expression and see if you can start building those up.

(01:07:59):

Okay. "Hi, Seth. Can you recommend any lessons to work with jealousy? I'm the oldest of three siblings, and it seems like I'm the only one who's dealing with transgenerational and early developmental trauma, or my siblings are in a very functional freeze. I'm jealous. It feels like a cold fire that's eating me up from the inside of my siblings, who I love, because of their normal lives, fulfilling relationships and successful careers, while I, on the other hand, am exhausted, struggling financially and only ever fall for unavailable people. Thank you." Oh boy. So first thing, it's almost certain that your siblings are in a very deep functional freeze. Not a hundred percent. I don't know all the realities of how you grew up, but generally speaking, this does not happen in a vacuum. What's very, very common for one person in the family system to be the one who actually notices the problem, and works to change it.

(01:09:09):

Well, everyone else just goes, la, la, la. I dunno what you're talking about, because they are in functional freeze and they're literally not feeling it. And yeah, that sucks, that it's really frustrating. But yeah, it's extremely likely that your siblings have all the same stuff. They're just not paying attention and they're not addressing it, which leaves you to do the heavy lifting. You're the one who's making the change in your family system in your generations. So that is one thing to orient to. Hopefully you can take a little pride in that. Celebrate your courage. There's the hero's journey that you're on of going into the abyss and healing these things and coming back with your knowledge and your insights, and maybe that's not for your family, maybe that's for somebody else, but you are the brave one who is deciding to explore these things and to heal yourself. So I hope that you can find some sense of agency and power and personal worth in that, because it's really significant. Jealousy is really, I mean, fundamentally, I think it's about aggression. If we think about what is the core feeling of jealousy, it's I want,

and it's not like, oh, I want, it's like this very, ah, there's an aggression in the wanting of jealousy. So that's how I see it.

(01:10:55):

There's a frustration in there at the root of that. So it may be that the healthy aggression practices may be useful for you. The annihilation work may be useful for you. Remember, it's okay to destroy people that you love. In your mind, if you discover that there is a part of you that is not just frustrated, but really just kind of feels intensely angry, you may not, but just know that that's okay if you do, there is likely at least some kind of aggression going on that's going to be helpful to express and explore. So it could start by noticing that sense of that cold fire. That's a pretty vivid description. How might you help that fire become more hot? How might you breathe on it? How might you express it? How might you allow it to come through in sounds, in expressions with your face, in movements? I think it's about getting that fire moving and also just accepting that, yeah, you're the one who's working to change things, and that's really powerful and wonderful. And also, yeah, it sucks kind of that it's on you right now.

(01:12:24):

We can't force other people to do this work. It's just the way it is. So we have to take responsibility for what we can do for ourselves, and that means working with these feelings that may come like jealousy, envy, but I think that that aggression is really at the root.

Alright. Alright. Last one, and just to note after this one, I have sort of a tradition of leading a group visualization slash practice at the end of the call, it'll be pretty short. So if you want to stick around for that, I like to do that at the last call. Okay. "I'm confused about multitasking. Irene will often teach about, for example, moving your head and neck and also your leg. This is, as I understand it, differentiation, and good. For example, when driving a car, you want to be able to turn your neck or move your eyes, not your whole body."

(01:13:36):

"Becoming aware of different body parts moving separately, like the skeleton, the muscles, et cetera, is a huge part of SBSM and Feldenkrais. Is that right?" Absolutely. Yeah. Learning how to pay attention and notice differentiation in different aspects of experience, not just body parts and physiology. I'll get more to that in a second. "Where I am confused is almost everything I learned about wellness and health seems to encourage us not to multitask. I've

also learned that multitasking is an illusion. You are not in fact typing and listening at the same time, but going back and forth when you do this. So attention is poor and so is focus and tasks actually take longer. What is the difference, if there is one, between the awareness and differentiation I think Irene is talking about, and our hurried, doing a hundred things at once multitasking?" So the fundamental difference is we're talking about internal stuff, not external stuff.

(01:14:32):

You're absolutely right when it comes to doing things like, I'm typing and also listening and also checking my email and doing all this at once. Yeah, that's not really multitasking. It's at a micro level. You're going back and forth focusing on different things and yes, it's not as efficient in the long run. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about an internal way of being that enables you to pay attention to multiple aspects of experience all at once. So that means as I'm sitting here, I'm talking to you and I'm seeing people on the screen and at the same time that I'm speaking, I'm aware of my breath coming and going. I feel the seat under my butt and the floor under my feet, and that's all happening at the same time. That's multitasking awareness. Can you speak and orient and feel your feet and notice your breath and notice your sensations happening inside all at the same time.

(01:15:43):

It's an internal practice, nothing to do with external. So that example you gave is also good, but that's more purely physical, like yeah, you want to be able to drive and see the road ahead of you, and if you need to turn your head without also turning your wheel, that is one form of it, but it's more about this other thing that I'm talking about. If we always have to close our eyes in order to notice sensations, that's a fine way to start. Ultimately though, we don't live with our eyes closed. That's just when we sleep, or I guess if we were in meditation, but we need to be aware of our sensations all the time. Right now I have a slight ache right here and this little itchy spot in this part of my neck, and I can feel a little ache in an area of my side here.

(01:16:37):

That's all happening right now as I'm talking to you, and I'm feeling my feet and my butt and my breath. That is what we're talking about in terms of multitasking awareness. It's very useful and it's something that really is how we're supposed to be. It's just that when we go through trauma, our attention tends to get compartmentalized into one thing and then maybe one

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thing. So part of regulation is learning this ability to be aware of all these different aspects of our human experience all at the same time. So it's something that just comes as you get more regulation and practice learning. You can build it by doing things like can you track your sensations when your eyes are open, or can you just feel your feet on the floor when your eyes are open and you're looking around? That's kind of how you build it. So hope that all makes sense.

(01:17:38):

Okay, well thank you all for the questions, and I am just going to lead a little group practice here. So feel free to participate with this if you like. And for this, we'll start just with some basics. So just connect to the ground, connect to the surface you're on. That's it. If you want to close your eyes, totally fine. We're going to do that anyways in a moment for visualizing purposes. Although of course if you want to explore any of this with your eyes open, totally great too. See if you can just notice where you are, what you're feeling underneath your butt if you're laying down, feeling your back. If you're standing, feeling your feet, and now go ahead if you like and close your eyes, and just see if you can find your center, whatever that means for you. Where in your body do you perceive your center right now? And as you hang out with that, just notice, is breath moving, and you feel a little sense of aliveness and breath as you feel your center. And start to visualize that there is this lovely light, like a point, a little point of light right there in the center. And as you breathe, maybe that light gets a little stronger. You notice what color it is. It can be any color you like. It never works for you, never shows up.

(01:20:24):

Great. So that's sort of your center light, just this little, this little point. And now can you visualize that you are actually going up above yourself a bit. It's almost like you're getting a bird's eye view and you're seeing this light from above. And you start to notice there's all these lovely strands of light that are flowing out from your light and connecting to other lights. And each of those lights around you, these are your friends, those in your family that you are close to, if you have those, these are your mentors, your teachers, helpers or healers. It can be people from the past who you've been inspired by, philosophers, authors, whoever, spiritual figures, whoever is a resource and a source of goodness in your life. They are also points of light that surround you and you're connected to them. And you can just see that. You can see your little point of light in the center, and these lovely little filaments stretching out to these points of light around you. And again, just breathe. Maybe your breath again brings a little



more brightness in, and you're just taking a moment to recognize whoever it is, alive or dead, in the spirit world, in reality, are with you.

(01:22:40):

And then we're going to even go a little bit more out, such that your light and these lights that surround you now just become one ball. Like you're floating up. And it's like you're far enough away now that these lights all merge into one. This is just you and your helpers represented as this globe of light. And what starts to happen is that our globes, our networks now start to find each other, wherever we are in the world, joined by this work and our intentionality to bring more goodness and health and healing into our lives. We are now linking up with each other. So our helpers and healers are finding everybody else's helpers and healers, these globes of light just connecting all across the earth.

(01:23:54):

And this is what my teacher Kathy called the helping friendly people matrix. Not only all the people that are joined with you, and not only all the people that are doing this work, but all of their helpers and all of our helpers, we're all in this together, we're all connected in this network, in this matrix of light. And that's there always, that's always real and available for us. Okay? So just thanking this network and acknowledging it as something that is real and available whenever we may need it. Knowing that we're not just supported by our own helpers, but we're supported by everyone in this collective field. All the helpers and healers and truth seekers and black sheep of the family throughout history, who changed things, who went against the grain. We're all in it together. And go ahead and just let that vision kind of fade. Come back to just noticing yourself where you are, thanking that network and knowing you can call on it at any time. Feeling your seat, feeling your breath. And when you feel ready, letting your eyes, if they have been closed, maybe start to find a little light in the room around you. Can you stay connected to the sense of there being this light inside you? As your eyes find the room, can you feel your feet or feel your seat as your eyes find the room?

(01:26:16):

Great. And with that, we will wrap up this round. So as always, thank you very much for showing up for yourselves and being here, and I will look forward to seeing you all in SBSM 17. So please do come on back, and I wish you all the very best in the meantime. Okay, bye everybody.