

Curated Q&A Call #2

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SETH: Okay, so with these calls often I get too many to answer all of them individually. So what I'll do is I'll look for common themes, and we had one section of common themes today, so we'll start off with that, and that was all around boundaries in the context of this work, trauma healing. So one question was about feeling depressed and anxious, dysregulated after visiting a parent, in this case, the mother, even after years of doing this work. Another person asked about feeling an increase in symptoms, like a little bit more sadness, the sort of sense of existential sadness, after setting a boundary with their mother. And someone else asked if it was possible to get better when one has early developmental trauma and very little co-regulation in their life, and they're still in a toxic relationship or family system. So starting with the last one first, not really.

(00:01:11):

One of the foundations of this work is that we have to have a living environment that is safe enough. Now, that doesn't mean it has to be perfect, but we need to feel free to express ourselves, to make sounds, to have emotions move through. Sometimes with this work, I mean, when talking with my clients, one of the words that comes up the most is weird. This work is just kind of weird because yes, you'll have these seemingly inexplicable movements that might want to come through your body. You'll have sensations that are strange, you'll have sounds that want to emerge, words that need to be spoken, you may need to explore rolling around. In some of - lots of - the lessons, there's rolling around on the floor, and sensing different things, and all sorts of things that aren't necessarily normal. So we need to be free to engage with these things.

(00:02:06):

If we are in a toxic family system, like in our living space, that can make that really tough. We need to be able to have a safe refuge of home in order to integrate this work. So the first step, a lot of time in doing this work, is identifying who is safe in your life and who is not, and that may mean setting some boundaries with people who just don't feel safe enough to you, to really be yourself around. Authenticity is key. So yes, boundaries are very important. Now, that doesn't mean that you have to cut everyone out of your life who may fit this bill. You don't have to permanently break all ties with your family. You don't have to go full nuclear, but you

can say, Hey, I need some space. I'm working on some stuff from my family system, and I need some space from my family right now while I'm doing this work.

(00:03:01):

If you frame a boundary kindly and respectfully in that manner with somebody, and they have a huge eruption, and they get angry, or they get really sad and try to guilt you, or they try to rope you back in some way, that is an even clearer indication that that boundary was needed in the first place. So it's really important to identify who is safe, who is not, and I can put up some boundaries with people who I don't feel safe around. If you're living with those people in the same house, that makes it really, really hard. So it's important to know that in terms of these manifestations of symptoms that can happen around boundary setting. So the first one, it sounds like there have been maybe some boundaries around the mom, or maybe not, but it says you've been doing this work for years, you're feeling pretty good, and then you go home and oh my gosh, afterwards I feel depressed, I feel anxious, I feel dysregulated.

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I feel like my progress has gone away. Well, please know that visiting your family of origin is one of the strongest triggers out there. It doesn't get much more powerful than that when it comes to putting us back into a childlike place, and we may find ourselves acting out in strange ways like, oh my God, where'd my regulation go? All of that is very normal, which again is why it's important to have boundaries around who we visit and how much time we spend with them. One of the ways you can know that you're really making a lot of progress is when you go home and stuff that would've sent you into a spiral before is just kind of like, oh, okay, yep, I know that dynamic. Yep, I recognize that and I can feel the echo of what my system would normally do, and I can feel it doing that a little bit, but I'm okay.

(00:04:59):

I'm present, I'm here. That is the kind of stuff you want to look out for. So if you have this experience of going home and visiting your mom and you come away from it feeling really dysregulated, more anxious, more depressed, that just may be an indication that you need some more space. You still need to limit how much time you're spending and visiting with your mom or maybe other family members. Then this other question, in terms of, well, I set a boundary and now I'm feeling this big increase in existential sadness. Well, that makes a lot of sense, especially sometimes when you're setting that with your mother because even though

that connection may be problematic, toxic, abusive, misattuned, whatever it is, and the flavor of dysfunction, it's still your mom, and there is a very powerful connection with our mom that's formed through the umbilical connection.

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It's a physical connection. Some might even say a quantum connection that's very hard to sometimes extricate oneself from and may require quite a boundary setting. So it's good you did that, but to a little vulnerable tender baby you inside, that's like a huge deal that's like, oh my god, my mommy, and this can be one of the real tricky things with trauma, is that we want connection, and yet we're scared of connection, and sometimes we want connection. We desperately need connection, and yet that connection is toxic for us. That's what happens for a lot of us in infancy and in childhood. So it makes complete sense that your system would have this kind of response after setting a boundary with your mom. It's like, oh my gosh, there's, there's a sort of destabilization that happens there. I felt that when my mom passed away a few years ago, everything was pretty much resolved, and we were in a good relationship, and when she died, it was not too bad.

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It was pretty peaceful, and yet I had grief. It wasn't super strong, but there was this really weird sense of just destabilization, the ground's been pulled out from under my feet, and that's just because there's been this significant change in the family structure, and the dynamics with this very powerful figure. So yeah, it makes a lot of sense. Just know that that's okay. Use your tools, maybe, to extra take care of yourself. It may mean using your resources extra. It may mean, kind of, having a period where you're minimizing stress a little bit while you wait for your system to kind of recalibrate to this new reality. Alright.

(00:07:51):

Okay, so going on to individual questions. "My resources shift and change each session. However, recently reading about the power of the dopamine effect has me concerned about some. For instance, I play online solitaire when I feel the need to zone out and thought a little of that was okay, but along with social media, I'm noticing an inability to stop how dopamine works with addiction in our brains has me wanting to totally stop certain resources, but I'm finding it hard. Also, would you view hypnotherapy tracks as a resource or a manipulation?" So the first thing to understand is that something can be both. Just because something is a

resource for us doesn't mean it's necessarily good for us in a holistic sense. Now, there's a detailed breakdown of this in the most frequently asked questions on the site, where it says what is a resource versus a coping mechanism, and the thing is, something can be both.

(00:08:49):

When we start this work, we may have a lot of resources that are external that just basically help us manage that, help us deal with the stress, that help us zone out and not feel so much. That's what we call a coping mechanism, and that's fine. That is a resource. Then there's other resources that are more healthy, and that allow us to be with the stress rather than zone out and avoid it. It sounds like your system is starting to recognize, okay, I'm starting to really feel how these ones aren't so good for me, and that is a really good awareness to have. It doesn't mean you have to leave them right away, but it's time, it sounds like, to start playing with titration. So how can you limit your time that you may spend? If it feels, like, good, to go cold turkey, that's cool too.

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Just remember that when we let go of a coping mechanism, we need to have something to replace it. We need to have some kind of internal resource. So what that may look like is, okay, I'm not going to allow myself to go to the solitaire game and zone out and space out. I'm going to use my inner resource of being able to notice my emotions and my sensations and my body, and I'm going to pay attention to what happens when I don't go to the thing. What does that elicit? What were you potentially avoiding by going to the thing that helps you zone out and gives you that dopamine hit, and that's an internal resource, the ability to track, to notice, to be with. It's a true internal resource. It sounds like that's getting stronger and you're starting to recognize, I still go to this thing, but it's feeling addictive.

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I'm starting to really notice that. So you don't have to go cold turkey, but you may want to start titrating your way out of it, and if you do go cold turkey with just denying yourself those dopamine hits, just remember that you'll want to bring something else in that can soothe and settle, even if it's something more simple, like a cup of tea or a walk or a hot bath or a shower or listening to some music or something like that. What's another way that you can bring in some soothing stimulus that's not so much about zoning out?

(00:11:06):

Okay, question. "I'm an alumni since 2022, but I've never made it through all the labs. I've not yet remembered any dreams in years except maybe once or twice a year. I'm more consistently doing the lessons now, and I can't help but think that this is causing me to have and remember my dreams almost daily. The dreams are wild and full of symbolism. Just I wonder about your thoughts. Any validation? Thank you." So yes, this is a very common experience, a very good experience. When we're working more with our system during the day, it's very common that we will have dreams that represent that at night, and they can be very vivid, archetypal in nature, representative of our process in some way that may be abstract, may be direct, and that's great. Yeah, that's a really good sign. It shows that our system is still working even while we're sleeping.

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It's still working on finding some kind of resolution through these subconscious processes and yeah, that'll increase the more you do the work consciously and deliberately. Maybe not for everyone all the time, but it is a very common experience we hear about a lot. Another thing that can happen with dreams is sometimes people will have recurring dreams. This was the case for me for decades. I would have this recurring dream of, I have a gig to play, but I can't find my cymbals, and then I'm trying to get my drum set up and the mic cords are all cable, it's twisted, and I've got to climb over here. It's this sort of, oh my God, I'm not ready and I have to perform consistently for years and years and years, and then slowly what started to happen is it started to shift like, oh, I have all my stuff.

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Where's everybody else? Okay, my bandmates are missing. Okay, but I'm ready to go. Okay, here we all are. Okay, now we're ready to play. It started to have these gradations of things being more in control and more unified. People will have all sorts of experiences like that where you may have a recurring dream that changes over time. Another one that's really common is a dream of being chased. You're being chased by some threat and you're just managing to escape or it's hard to escape. You're running. A lot of times what will happen is people will realize, oh wait, in my dream I can actually stop and turn around and face this threat. I can defend myself against this threat. Sometimes I can destroy this threat. I've seen that full progression happen, and where it goes from running in terror to turning around and

destroying the thing that is again, a really powerful sign of the work that we're doing. So the dream world is fascinating and is often representative of our inner processes. Also, sometimes it's just random gobbly gook and it's the brain just processing events of the day. But yeah, with the context of this work, that can be quite powerful.

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Okay. "How do we distinguish a narrative, the story and the meaning from a somatic imprint of a life event? Can the narrative we have about an event create and or perpetuate a trauma, is a negative connotation of an event, an indicator that there may be trauma there, and can people confuse their narrative about an event as a trauma?" Sure. Yeah. So lots of different questions about the same kind of theme here within this. So in terms of how, in the first part, how do we distinguish the narrative, the story from the somatic imprint? Well, that's simple. The somatic imprints in your body, the narrative is in your mind, so the narrative is your thoughts. Sometimes your emotions can be part of that, although those are also in the body, but the thoughts can bring about the emotions. The imprint is in your tissues, so it's also in the emotions, but deeper than that, it's in the underlying nervous system state.

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It's in the fight, flight or freeze that is present, and it's often directly in the tissues in terms of bracing patterns in the musculature or fascia. It's in the incomplete procedural memory, meaning self-protective responses that we may need to make that we never got to make that want to emerge through our system. That's some of those weird movements I was talking about early on that may want to come through. So that somatic imprint is literally in the physicality of the body. The narrative and the meaning is in the mind. Can the narrative we have about a trauma create or perpetuate a trauma? I don't think a narrative can necessarily create a trauma. A trauma comes from a very overwhelming life experience where we go into survival mode and we aren't able to come out of it. It'd be tough to do that to ourselves. I think just with a narrative, what we can do is re-traumatize ourself with a narrative, where if we're just looping around in our thoughts and our thoughts and our thoughts and our thoughts, and replaying the event over and over again, and feeling the emotions over and over again without connection to necessarily the felt sense and the physicality and the environment, the present environment, then yes, that can be retraumatizing, which is why some forms of talk therapy can be retraumatizing for people with trauma.

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It can be really difficult to just rehash what happened to you in that kind of narrative style. It is a negative connotation of an event indicator, that there may be trauma there for sure. Generally speaking, it's not so much a negative cognition though, it's what happens in your body. So if you think about a thing and you go into fight flight mode or you start to shut down and become spaced out or numb, start to get really tense, sweaty, whatever it is, that's an indicator that there's trauma, still present, the negative thought on its own. Maybe like, oh, that thing was so shitty that it happened to me and I just keep on thinking about it. Yeah, that's likely an indicator that there's trauma and maybe you just had a shitty experience that wasn't necessarily traumatic. So just because you're having negative cognition about an event, it doesn't necessarily guarantee you were traumatized.

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It may just have sucked, right? So there's a degree to this stuff. Having a bad stressful experience doesn't necessarily equate trauma automatically. So you can be more clear about what's happening in the body, which is why we work somatically. I think about this thing, yeah, I have negative thoughts about it and my heart starts racing. I start sweating, I start spacing out. I start feeling angry. Those are the indications that there's trauma. And then can people confuse their narrative about an event as a trauma? Absolutely, and that's one of the most common things, and that's what we teach early, early on, is the trauma is not the story. The trauma isn't the event. The trauma is what happened in your body in response to the event. So that's why two people can go into the same event and one will be traumatized and the other will not depending on their history, because the trauma is not the event. It's what happened in here. So yes, you can confuse your cognition and think that the event was the trauma, when in fact it's your somatic experience, your physiology, your nervous system state.

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All that being said, meaning is important. It's just that most people and most modalities historically are fixated on the meaning to the detriment of everything else, but meaning is an important part. What we really like to see happen is when people work somatically and are working with the felt sense and the nervous system state and what's happening and what may want to emerge, the meaning will sometimes arise organically. Oftentimes that meaning may be different than what they thought it was. So there's a classic example that really beautifully

illustrates this from Peter's work. He shared this in one of the masterclasses I attended where he was working with a young man who was convinced he had been sexually assaulted. He had all this pain in his genitals, this avoidance of sex, all this stuff that would classically indicate that there may have been some sexual trauma, and through working with the felt sense, what they discovered was that, oh my gosh, no, this is from when I volunteered to get circumcised as a teenager.

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The guy had decided he wanted to be circumcised when he was about 13, and the trauma was from that, from him wanting to pull away from that experience that was overwhelming. So he had had a meaning that was incorrect, and if he had stayed with that meaning it may not have ever led to resolution. By working with the physicality and staying connected to the environment and the impulses in the body, the real meaning revealed itself, and that's really beautiful when that happens.

Okay, all right. "I am trying to differentiate between symptoms being triggered and feelings. When it's too much for my capacity, I get stressed, which is both sympathetic tension, and elevated heart rate, and freeze, dizziness. Hard to think. The feeling behind this is fear, not being enough, judgment. I'm not safe. Should I work directly with a stress response like calming down with resources, or with a feeling of fear more directly, like acknowledging it?"

(00:21:12):

These feel like slightly different approaches, and that's a great inquiry. There is a difference between working with the emotions, and working with the nervous system and the physiology directly. Now, oftentimes both will be in the picture, and it's important to work with both. So both are good. Sometimes there is an emotion that needs to be expressed that never got to be expressed, and that may need to happen first before we can get to the more delicate work, that's working directly with the physiology, because that emotion is sometimes louder, more urgent. That being said, we can also get lost by just staying in the emotion, because we need to work directly with the physiology by identifying, like you say, oh wow, I'm in high sympathetic right now, or I'm starting to space out. I must be going into freeze. What can I do to work with that?

(00:22:09):

So like you described, yeah, maybe that means I'm going to use some containment to hold my system. I'm going to go to a resource to help calm down. I'm going to do a little sound and expression to help some of this pressure sort of move out, whatever it may be, right? This is why following your impulse is one of the first things we talk about and is so important. We can never just say for sure like, oh, if you're feeling this, do this. What is your impulse? And those impulses are often biological, and again, sometimes weird, the emotional expression, sometimes people have more access to emotion, less access to the physiology, nervous system state. Sometimes it's the other way around. So I would say see what it's like to play with both. See what it's like to really feel into the emotions, and to allow yourself to verbalize or express the words or the sounds of that emotion.

(00:23:07):

What's the physicality? What's the posture of that emotion? If it's fear, it's not safe, is there an impulse to start to curl up, to cover up with a blanket? That might start to lead you more into the felt sense stuff. Also, remember when working with the nervous system directly, it's not all about calming down. Remember, ultimately it's about going with the activation, allowing it, staying present, like letting the breath get shallow, and feeling the tension, not trying to change it, allowing it to reach a threshold of intensity. That is how these sympathetic things tend to resolve. That takes time, to build the capacity to do that, right? So again, this is what differentiates our approach to this work for many, a lot of the approaches you'll find, especially in the cornucopia of online offerings out there will be about how can we work with a stress response?

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How can we be cathartic and really let this come through and have this high intensity experience? The problem is most people don't actually have the capacity to do that yet. They only have the capacity to do that by recruiting more survival energy, which doesn't lead to resolution. So it's about slowly building the capacity, which may mean you let yourself feel the intensity for a bit, and you learn to identify, oh, this is starting to get more than I can handle now, I'm going to go to my resources. I'm going to calm down. I'm going to soothe myself. I'm going to have some tea. I'm going to listen to music. I know what my things are that I can go to in order to chill out a bit. So I hope that all makes sense. There's no right way. It's like what's more useful at the moment? What's more present in the moment and how can you allow yourself to explore all of that?

(00:25:08):

Okay. "Could I have an exercise or practice for clench fists accompanied by a fear of or unsafety around letting go of controlling everything? How could I go about working with this on my own? If you could let me know some reassuring words about this to say to myself, along with any exercise, that would be great. Many thanks." So again, what is the impulse? What does your body want to do? That's what you're looking to discover when you're sitting there with your clenched fists and you're feeling fear, what might want to happen next? So that's kind of what you're looking for organically, but may I can give you some ideas for what to start with. So one of the things that may be very useful here, if you're sitting there with clenched fists, what would it be like to do that more? Clench your fists, more, maybe even clench your jaw a little bit, maybe make a little sound.

(00:26:12):

Then let it go. This is a lesson we'll get into later in the program, called tense and relax. If you're an alumni, I'm not sure if you are or not who asked this question, but if you are, you can go to that lesson now, but if not, it will come. But briefly, that's what it's about. Instead of immediately trying to stop the tension, increase the tension, do it more to see if there's another part of your body that wants to get involved. Now, again, this may spike your sympathetic in a way that's very uncomfortable, so it may be you just do that a tiny bit and then you let yourself again, soothe, resource, settle, see what you can manage. Just trying to let it go and relax often is counterproductive, because the body is trying to do something. This is obviously a sympathetic charge that's rooted in fear, but there's also aggression present.

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So, fear and anger. These are flip sides of the same survival response, which is just the sympathetic response. It's got the flight side running away. That's fear. It's got the fight side. That's anger, aggression. You can work with either of those and you're still working with the same charge. That being said, aggression has a bit more potency to it, a bit more agency to it sometimes. So you might want to explore like, okay, I'm feeling scared, but what if I explore my aggression by doing this more and maybe then let it go? Or what might it be like to explore the flight response? My fists are clenched, but I'm going to start running with my legs. I'm going to let my legs start going and see what happens while you're sitting. See what happens. What's it like to move some energy through the lower body and then again, pause, rest. When you're in

the places of more settling, that are more about calming, soothing, there are some words that you can say that may be useful. Now, again, this is a cognitive approach, which isn't our expertise, but these come from Peter, and I've seen him use this many, many times in the context of somatic work, which is, I'm alive, I survived and I'm here. Or sometimes I'm alive, I survived and I'm real. Those are both pretty powerful mantras when it comes to claiming your present moment and the fact that you did survive because you're here.

(00:28:59):

Another thing that may be useful to remember, you're talking about control, is this notion of I can't control what happens to me, but I can control how I respond, which is a universal truth. I think Buddha said something about that quite a long time ago. So yeah, you can't really control your life experience necessarily. You can to some degree by avoiding obviously dangerous situations and learning to follow your impulse and your intuition, but life has chance. Life has chaos. We're going to have loss, we're going to have pain. It's unavoidable. We can't control what happens to us. We can control how we respond, and hopefully that response as you get more and more into this work is more and more of a somatic approach, learning to work with the physicality of what's happening.

(00:29:59):

Just going to have a sip of water. Okay. "Hi, Seth. I often face issues where my reasonable requests for help, whether with professionals or services aren't heard or are dismissed. I asked here on the form about hiring helpers while I heal, and I was advised to either minimize contact or go without, which feels like neglect or tolerate the situation. I'm improving, but I still need assistance with basic tasks. I'm learning to listen to my body, but would appreciate your perspective. Am I missing something in getting my needs met?" Okay, so in terms of let's address the simple part first. Yeah, if you have practical needs that you just need help with basic daily tasks, that's not unusual. We've had many people go through this program who are bedridden and who have become much more functional, but for a time there may be a great deal of dysfunction or difficulty in accomplishing basic tasks.

(00:31:15):

Yeah, that's great to hire some helpers. I think that's probably, it sounds like that's necessary, and you'll have to know that it may not be ideal. You may not get the most perfect, regulated, empathetic, caring people. It depends on what you're talking about, but remember, most

people have trauma to some degree or another. Most people haven't yet discovered this work a lot. Most people aren't working on themselves at this point in terms of just general numbers. So yeah, you may get a helper who is a little abrasive or isn't perfect, or there's a bit of a personality clash. If that happens, then yeah, it's kind of like, well, I need their help. They don't need to be my caretaker. They don't need to be my friend. They are here to do a job, and that's how I would look at it, and of course, you can try to find other people who may be a better fit if this is the case.

(00:32:12):

I mean, ideally you would have people who are at least nice and who you feel good about, at least good enough. So maybe you try a few different people, but also just recognize the practicality of they're here to do a job. If I take my car to a mechanic, I don't really care if they're super empathetic and caring and attuned to me. I want them to fix my car. So same thing here. They're here to bring you food. They're not here, be your therapist. So differentiating about that, these people are here to help do practical things to help me move through my day, and that seems like that would be important given what you described. Now, it's possible that boundaries, again, may be useful in that if you decide, yep, this person is great, they bring me my food at dinnertime, that's awesome, but I don't really want to hang out with them.

(00:33:04):

You can ask them to just leave it outside your door. That's great. I'll get it myself. Thanks. There may be some practical things that'll be useful in mitigating that. In terms of the deeper question here though, it's this circular repeating pattern that you're experiencing where you try to get your needs met. You're asking reasonable requests, you're asking for things that are appropriate to the services that are being offered, and you're repeatedly having an experience of feeling like you're dismissed. You aren't heard, you aren't taken seriously, even though your request is totally valid. That's got to be frustrating. I'm sorry. That is something that happens a lot in many different ways with trauma. That is, it's a repeating phenomenon that happens over and over again, and I don't know if we have the scientific equipment developed yet to measure why that happens, but anecdotally, we are absolutely certain it does.

(00:34:08):

I mean, this is to the degree where I've had one client who was hit while driving, their car was struck by a red car in the exact same spot three times. It can be that specific, where we have the same experience over and over. This is even more common relationally like you described, where no matter what I do, I keep on having this experience where I get this same kind of response from people over and over and over again. The reason is because there's something in your system that is unresolved, that is about that experience, and for whatever reason, when we have something that is stuck in us, particularly around relationship and attachment, it seems we will find ourselves in that situation over and over and over again. This is, I believe, because our system is always organically searching for healing. Now, that may be confusing.

(00:35:07):

What do you mean? How can that be healing? Having the same frustrating experience over and over again? Well, it's only healing if you can have a different outcome, which is what your system is looking for, and oftentimes we will somehow put ourself in the same situation over and over again because our system is trying to find a different outcome. So in terms of how to work with that, again, it's all in how do you respond? You can't necessarily control that this is happening, but it tends to be that the shift in experiencing that comes from how you respond to it, and that may mean following the wounding of that experience inside to a deeper core wound that needs to be heard, expressed, witnessed, validated, et cetera. To me, this sounds like it could very easily stem from an experience of early developmental trauma where you really did not get your developmental needs met appropriately, and that is what you're experiencing.

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There's nothing more reasonable to request from a parent than that they be there for us in an empathic, tuned, attuned, caring, regulated way. That's what our biology needs. What's reasonable to expect is that our parents provide a model of regulation and safety, and almost none of us get that for a variety of reasons. So that is a very deep imprint where I'm asking for what I need. I mean, not even verbally, this is pre-verbal, but the organism is demanding what it needs through its cries, through how it acts, through how the baby makes sounds and movements. The parent's job is to attune and respond appropriately and accurately. If that's not happening, that's a very deep wound of, I'm trying to get something met that's totally reasonable, and I keep on not being heard or recognized. So that's my hunch, is that there's some deep, deep attachment wound there that's probably early developmental in nature.

(00:37:29):

“During the 21 day tuneup and SBSM course, I realized that I often fight against my body reactions. Instead of accepting and honoring them in this way, I actually perpetuate the fight flight energy myself, and I circle in the stress response. Could this be a harmful pattern I gained due to early misattunement from my parents? What is your insight of this dynamic? Can you please give some advice on it?” So yeah, kind of similar to the last one, if our early experiences growing up aren't validated, if we're told, oh, you don't feel that, right? If our emotions aren't recognized, validated, if our creativity and our authenticity isn't recognized and validated, then that can set us up in this cycle where we argue against our own experience. That can be particularly easy to do with the sensations of trauma because they're difficult, because they're intense. It's very easy to have something arise in the body in this work and to get angry at it.

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God, I don't want to feel that go away. Oh, that's so frustrating. That's so painful. Of course, that makes sense, and again, we have to build the capacity through the foundational practices, through the education, to be able to be with those things, but our attitude is a huge part of that to be sure. So the way that I like to describe how I hold space for stuff that arises is imagine that you are at a mall, a busy crowded mall somewhere, and you're just doing your thing, and then a little child comes up to you and their face is streaked with tears and they're crying and they're lost, and they need help. Are you going to respond to that kid with anger and frustration, what your inner sensations are? Essentially, they're this little scared you that needs kindness and empathy and care and curiosity and welcoming, right?

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So how would we respond to that kid at the mall? Oh my gosh, are you okay? Here, come here. Come on, I'll help you out. I'm here for you. Come on, let's find your mom. Right? That's the kind of welcoming energy we need to apply to our own inner experience if we want to start moving forward with processing this stuff, if we get angry at it, absolutely. We're just cycling around in the same thing. So I would encourage you to adopt that mindset where it's like, and this is fine, even if you have a knee jerk reaction of like, oh, I hate that. It's like, wait, okay. Right. No, hello. Okay, I hear you. Hello. I feel okay. I can feel you. What's happening? It's fine. It can take some practice, but that is the general attitude we need to respond to our inner experience.

(00:40:34):

Just like, yeah, yeah, they're there. I hear you. I'm here. I'm with you. What do you need? What do you need from me? And then we can start to get information. Oh, I need to stand up for myself. I need to feel my strength, or I need to really be nurtured. I need to put a big blanket over. I need to cry. I need to make some strange sounds. I need to move my spine, feels like it wants to do this. Whatever it may be. The doorway to discovering those organic impulses is often through how we respond to them, which is with, again, care, curiosity, kindness, empathy for ourselves.

(00:41:18):

"I've had a lot of developmental trauma and I've overcome drug and alcohol addiction. The problem is now when I'm asked to publicly speak or talk in large groups, I feel my whole head and body start to overheat to a point that I can't really think or say what I want to say. This also has, a few times, almost led to me fainting or just completely spacing out, like I'm frozen. What can I do to help myself overcome this?" So first, let's just identify biologically what's happening. The first thing you describe, I start to overheat. I can't really think, my whole body and head starts to get hot. That's your sympathetic response mounting, okay? If that goes on long enough, your freeze response will kick in, which is the, oh my gosh, I feel like I'm going to faint. I'm disoriented. I'm going to pass out.

(00:42:07):

There's the freeze response. So we really want to see if we can intervene on the sympathetic side of things earlier, the better, because once it gets to that freeze state, that's going to be really difficult. And basically we've just got to leave the situation, one way. I mean, first, I would encourage you to for a while, avoid public speaking in front of large groups. You're going to want to train your system to be able to do this in a titrated way, drop by drop. I'm not a fan of classic exposure therapy, which is where you put yourself into the situation you're scared of and you often just muscle through more survival energy. But if we look at the concepts of exposure therapy in a titrated way with a somatic lens, that can be useful, which may mean, okay, let's start by hanging out with a group of my close friends and I'm going to give a speech, right?

(00:43:10):

You're going to pretend that you're giving a large public address and it's two or three of your buddies. What's that like? Can you do that? And in that context, if you start to get hot, if you can start to overheat, it's okay. It's just your friends. You orient to them, you stop. You talk about what's happening, you share your experience. Maybe you wiggle a little bit and maybe need to shake it off, and you allow some emotion to come through all the stuff you couldn't do necessarily if you were actually public speaking, right? It's too much pressure right now on your system to try to contain all this while you're doing actual big group public speaking. So titration exposure, then it's okay, what if you use your imagination? What if you just imagine that there is a huge auditorium that you're about to address, and again, you're totally free to do whatever you need to do to start processing what may arise.

(00:44:08):

That's the kind of approach I would take. Then maybe once you start to speak to a little bigger groups for real, over time, you'll gain capacity to stay present with the heat. Understand that it is just a fight flight response, just, it's a fight flight response. You're not presently under threat. This is a response from the past, even though it feels like it's about the present. And you may start to learn that, oh, if I am feeling the heat, but I'm really going to feel my feet on the ground. That's my only focus right now as I'm orienting, to contact with the ground, and I'm going to orient, I'm going to look around. I'm not going to look at the faces. I'm going to orient to the back walls. I'm going to see different things. You'll learn different somatic tools to work with that sympathetic response, but for now, maybe limit that and do this titrated exposure approach where you're free to engage creatively with what arises. I saw a comment. I read someone did it with karaoke. That's great. Yeah, sure. Same kind of thing. Start doing karaoke in your house or then go with your friends to the bar. No one gives a shit, and then you can start playing with something like that. That's a great idea if you like that kind of thing. Okay.

(00:45:38):

Okay. "Can you geek out on non-reciprocal relationships? In practice, it might be what I feel if I smoke ganja." If you don't know, ganja is marijuana. "Two forces work at the same time. I smoke it because things finally surge up. For me, it's about finding the discomfort to find comfort, no longer invisible so I can work with it. Another voice in my mind talking back, okay, I can think. I can feel, I've tried this sober, but it's not the same kind of space, time and felt sense. My sobriety is always more non feeling. It seems only in the battle of that experience can I find myself." So this is very interesting, because what you're describing is actually exactly

how cannabis works. So cannabis can be very useful in the context of this work. It can also be very detrimental. It all depends on the lens with which you're using it and the intention.

(00:46:38):

I mean, for some people it may be a resource that just helps you chill out and soothe, great, no problem. If we're talking chronic use where someone is stoned all the time, which used to be me, that is generally not the most conducive to doing this work, because you're not going to have access to your full range of sensation and emotion if you're always kind of checked out, spaced out. So occasional use is definitely preferred. Now, what's really interesting about cannabis is it temporarily suppresses the short-term memory centers, which are the same parts of the memory associated with body image. So what this means is your habitual body image, the way that you normally feel and see yourself, is repressed. That allows stuff that is not part of the habitual pattern of perception to arise, and I've used cannabis myself for a long time like this in a powerful shamanic way to get at stuff that I couldn't find otherwise.

(00:47:39):

There's stronger psychedelics like Ayahuasca and LSD and mushrooms that can do a similar thing in terms of they really open up the shadow, and often that's too much. Cannabis is often too much for some people as well. So I'm not recommending it. I'm just talking about my experience. But I have noticed for myself that sometimes or often in the past with judicious use, that temporary suppression of the habitual body image allows stuff that's not part of what I know to arise, and I can feel it and I can process it. And cannabis, you're not so dissociated from reality that that work doesn't take root. Like in a traditional plant ceremony like Ayahuasca or LSD or something with mushrooms, something that's much more strongly psychoactive. You're so divorced from reality that I don't believe that work can integrate. You may discover things and open up things, but it won't be able to integrate into your daily sober lived experience. With cannabis, you're a little closer to consensual reality.

(00:48:47):

It's a little bit more possible, and you still need to do the sober work. So I don't know how often you're using this in this way. It sounds like a fine approach. It sounds similar to what I did, but you also do need to do the work in a sober way and start to learn to feel these things when you're not altered. So it's possible that it would be helpful to do some one-on-one work. Maybe your system just needs a little support of a attuned connection from a good practitioner

in order to get at that stuff while you're sober. That is possible. You need a little bit more safety, or maybe you need someone to say like, okay, hey, what's going on with your shoulder blades right there? Which is the kind of stuff us annoying SE practitioners will do, is point out stuff that's happening in your body that you may not be aware of.

(00:49:42):

So it's possible that that could be helpful for you, at least in the short term, to sort of open the door to sober perception of these things. But I don't feel like there's anything necessarily wrong with how you're using cannabis. It's just possible that it's maybe too much or you need to also do this other approach because when we're moving through the world, generally speaking, in our day-to-day, we're sober, at least a lot of us. So that's when stuff's going to come up and we need to be able to work with it in the moment in that sober way as well.

(00:50:29):

All right. Just looking at the chat a little bit. Yep. There are transcripts. This is all recorded. The replay will be posted on the site. There'll be a transcript of it. You bet. There'll be a list of resources that I mentioned. There'll be a list of all the questions asked. It'll all be there. All right. "I have a history of early developmental trauma, newborn surgery with tubes in the nose to the esophagus, and trachea to lungs, and I was extremely shy as a kid and a young adult. I've worked on it in various ways, including Toastmasters. My voice is monotone and I was told by a vocal teacher in the past that it stuck in my chest and throat. Will my vocal prosody improve with this work? How do you recommend that I improve it? You and Irene both have very full prosody. How did you achieve that?" Okay, so first off, that's a very intense early trauma. I just really want to validate that, because even though it sounds like it was necessary, lifesaving, really important, that's intense, and that's a very invasive thing to happen as a newborn, and it makes total sense that there's going to be a lot of freeze and constriction through all these structures, which is why you don't have access to full prosody.

(00:51:50):

Toastmasters is not recommended for anybody with trauma. That's exposure therapy. That's way too intense. You don't have a trauma-informed facilitator. You're in a crowded room full of people, expected to perform. Please don't do it. Not good for people with trauma. So yes, your vocal prosody absolutely can improve this work. For myself and Irene, I don't think we ever lost vocal prosody, so it's not something we had to regain. If you don't know, prosody is just the

ability to have inflection. I'm speaking here and then I'm speaking up here and I've got different softness, and then I'm louder, and yeah, that's prosody.

(00:52:34):

That is something, I've been a musician and a performer all my life, so that's just something that I've had access to creatively. That being said, I had an experience of trauma as a young person around performance and singing, and I couldn't sing at all for decades. Even though I could sing when I was young before this trauma, that totally froze up my voice. So I did have to do some work around singing. Talking with prosody was never a problem, but singing I couldn't do, and now I can. A lot of that came through just doing it and sounding terrible by myself. Singing along with a radio is a great way. Singing along with songs that we like. That's a really good way, and don't care what you sound like, just do it. Making sounds that have nothing to do with the words, allowing oneself to be silly babbling, even like, I'm just going to blah, right?

(00:53:39):

I'm just going to make noise. I'm going to make a sound. I'm going to explore what I can do with this stuff if I'm not trying to make sense necessarily. Yeah, mirror practice can be useful. Seeing yourself doing these types of things. Absolutely. Allowing yourself to play, allowing yourself to be silly. What is that like? Also, you may need to work directly with what's called the diaphragms, and again, this is something we'll get to later in SBSM, the diaphragm lessons, but the diaphragms are structures in our body that tend to hold emotion and tension. This is from the osteopathic tradition, so there's the diaphragm. These are like containers. There's the shoulders across here, which includes the lungs. There's the actual respiratory diaphragm itself. There's the bowl of the pelvis, and the lower abdomen is another diaphragm. There's also diaphragm in the bottom of the skull, which includes the throat and neck, the tentorium, and the top of the head.

(00:54:53):

So these are all structures where we hold stuff. Again, we'll get into this later, but for now, you could explore what it's like to work with bringing breath and space into the shoulders and upper chest and throat. If you just, can you get expansion in there? What's that? If you can't or if it feels painful, what's it like to maybe put your hands there and okay, I'm feeling my hands and I'm meeting my hands with my breath, and I'm noticing what that feels like that just wanted to come out spontaneously. Cool. Okay. Same thing with the belly. Full prosody is

about the throat. It's also about the belly. It's about being able to speak from down here, from the diaphragm. That's the lower end. So we want to have access to all of those structures, working with breath, and bringing in a sense of space in that way, allowing sounds that may want to come out, which again may bridge into let yourself be silly. All of that could be potentially useful.

(00:56:12):

Yeah, I have tons of music that I've created on the site. If you want to listen to that and make sounds along with it, that could be useful. There's no words in any of it, just toning and different kinds of singing that could be useful potentially.

Okay. "Recently, my dog died. I stayed connected to the environment, sensations and cries, and I arrived at peace, but it cracked open something very deep and old. A suffering I've always had in my chest. I have so much pain around the heart and the right hand and anxiety. Can you explain more about the heart? The heart space slash heartbreak? Everyone protects it the most, and it's so hard for people to open their hearts. I really don't want to shut down in this experience, but I feel I'm on the edge of my capacity." So again, this is about the diaphragms and the lungs.

(00:57:12):

This is literally about the tissues. Most people hold a lot of tension across their chest and in their lungs, particularly around grief. So when we get a heartbreak, oftentimes what that is, is it's actually so much emotional density that our bracing breaks down, and we actually, like you say, you feel this old suffering you've always had in your chest, because the heartbreak has enabled you to really feel it. So it's absolutely an opportunity, and I hear you that it's at the edge of your capacity. So resource, resource, resource. Remember your resources with grief. The best we can do is get out of the way as much as possible. So what wants to come through from those painful sensations in the chest? What sounds want to come through? Can you allow the throat and the jaw to be soft and allow the energy to rise up through the eyes, up through the head?

(00:58:14):

It's like a wave that moves through the body. Interestingly, I had the same kind of experience a while back. My cat died, and I had lost a brother when I was a young child. It's about 12 or 13.

My brother died, an older brother, and I really froze up At that time. I didn't cry for him for decades. Still, there was still a charge there that was incomplete, because I had never allowed myself to see his body. I refused at the funeral. I couldn't do it. I couldn't go up to the casket. I couldn't see. When my cat died a few years ago, I actually held his body and looked at it. Boom. There was the trigger that led to the rest of the completion that had been stuck. I needed to have the experience of seeing the death. So it was a very similar thing of just this, oh, this ache.

(00:59:10):

So really, yeah, care, self-care, nurturing, using your resources and doing your best to get out of the way, minimize stress. If you can minimize what you do as you're moving through this period of grief, take it easy as much as possible, and hold space for yourself to let this stuff just move through the ache, the pain that is aliveness, that is your system not being braced, not being shut down and constricted. And I know it sucks and is hard, but that pain is life in this context. It is the emotion that needs to be felt and allowed to move through what impact does. Sorry, hold on a second. Yeah, it's 11, so it's been an hour. Let's take a little break. We've only got about four questions left, so we'll finish up in the next half hour for sure. And let's just take a little pause. Go stretch, go pee. If you need to have some water, we'll be back here in just a few minutes.

(01:03:27):

All right. Welcome back. Before I move on, I just want to respond to something I saw in the comments related to the last question asked. Is chest tightness always heartbreak? Then, it happened yesterday and I noticed, and it felt like armoring my heart against a mother who can't attune to me as an adult. Absolutely. So my response there was about this particular question, just because you're feeling pain in your chest doesn't necessarily mean it's always heartbreak in the context of that question. Yes, I believe it was based on the description. From what you described, that's a slightly different thing, which is maybe your heart is actually kind of open and soft, and then you come into contact with someone, particularly a family member like your mother who is angry, abusive, misattuned. Even as an adult maybe. Yeah. There's going to be constriction, an armoring that can happen through the tissues here, particularly the fascia, and that can feel painful and constrictive, and it's not about heartbreak. It's about the fact that something is constricting and armoring up. That is usually more open. So yeah, that's a different context.

(01:04:43):

And yeah, when we're talking about bracing, which can be used, very often is used to hold in emotion. That is done literally with the body, with the tissues. The tissues become rigid, inflexible, the fascia is a huge part of this fascism, mysterious stuff. We're just learning more and more about it as time goes on. It appears to be almost its own nervous system, essentially in the way that it responds to the environment and communicates information to the organism about the environment, a very intelligent system. It's the stuff that lets your skin slide over the flesh of your arm. It's the slippery layer in between the skin and the muscle, and that wraps around all the organs. It's this silvery kind of slippery global tissue layer. It's incredibly important when we go through stress, it can tense and be like steel. Anyone who's had or does deep myofascial work will have encountered this, where it's fascia that is supposed to be pliable and flexible can become braced like steel for decades. It can be like almost bone, and this is very often what we experience if we have constriction and armoring in our chest. If you walk into a room where there's all sorts of bad vibes and nobody's saying anything, and your stomach starts to get tense and tight, that's the fascia constricting around the intestines, a lot of the time around the musculature. It's a very intelligent, responsive system that communicates a lot of information about our environment.

(01:06:21):

“What impact does circumcision have on the early development of the nervous system? I recently unlocked a feeling I couldn't ever place like a feeling of sexual violation. It's a strange custom, and it seems like America is one of the only countries where it's normal. It's something that I would've never uncovered if it had not been for plant medicine, but I'm curious about the best ways to heal a part of the body that has been removed similar to phantom limb.”
Yeah, so just to preface my answer here, I'm not talking about religion here. I understand circumcision is an important part of some religions. I'm talking about, from the lens of trauma and the nervous system. So I don't mean to be disrespectful to anybody's religion. That being said, from the perspective of the nervous system, the organism, it's a horrific practice. It is a very powerful trauma to the system early on.

(01:07:15):

One that I experienced unfortunately, and that many men have experienced. And yeah, in America, it's one of the few places left where it's really normalized, and it's starting to change

more, thank goodness, because the foreskin, there's a lot of misunderstanding about what the foreskin is. Even people say, oh, it's just the covering over the tip of your penis. No, it's the tip of your penis. It is the most sensitive part of your sexual anatomy. So when it's removed, not only is there a deadening of sensation, which can explain maybe a lot of the aggressive, violent kind of sexual tendencies, particularly in American culture and in other places, because you literally have to be more violent to feel more. There's some things you can do about that, which I'll get into later, but it's a deadening of your sensation. You're never going to feel the same again. You won't have access to the same level of sensitivity.

(01:08:14):

There's also a very deep attachment wound where you're essentially being betrayed at a deep level by your caregiver at a physiological level. My caregiver is supposed to protect me and keep me safe. They're allowing the most sensitive part of my anatomy to be cut off, often without anesthesia. That's a huge core wound, often can result in a hatred and anger towards the feminine that is deeply unconscious. Again, look at American culture. Okay? I'm not saying circumcision is the root of all of it, but it's part and parcel of the aggressive male patriarchy system, in my opinion. So yeah, not a fan, not something I would recommend to future parents. If it's something that you did as a parent, please, and you feel like, oh my God, what did I do? Like, hey, give yourself a break. Give a doctor, I'm sure who pressured you into it. In most cases, we all have to learn about this stuff, and it's like you say, it's normalized in so much of the culture.

(01:09:17):

So please do not feel bad about yourself if this is something that you did for your kids, but it's the fact that it's a very deep trauma, often, yeah, something that you're only going to ever encounter through a lot of internal somatic work or maybe through a plant medicine ceremony. Like I said earlier, they can open up stuff that's very, very deep in the system, and now it's here for you to process. So awesome in terms of what to do. So there's likely going to be a very deep grief and sense of loss, a pulling and contraction of the pelvic floor where you would've been trying to escape. So, pelvic floor, tightening up, trying to pull away. That may be part of the tension and grief, and that may all be locked together. Oftentimes, it's so numb that it's hard to notice that it's like that.

(01:10:10):

So, working with the pelvic floor, working with your breath, working with very gentle stretching, sometimes, self touch, exploring the structure, that is something that could be very useful, allowing the emotions that may arise, which again may be a very deep sense of hopelessness, loss, grief. Underneath that, there is almost certainly a tremendous rage, a tremendous sympathetic charge that is extremely primal that we will get into, healthy aggression work, around lab six. But if you need a preview, please go to my blog and look up healthy aggression. Maybe Susan, if you could link that in the chat. There's an article on healthy aggression. There's another article on annihilation. These are practices that will probably be necessary and useful as part of this resolution, and not just this is healthy aggression, the annihilation work. These are very advanced practices. We don't get into them until lab six.

(01:11:14):

That being said, I'll often mention them beforehand, because some people are ready for 'em. Some people are nowhere near ready for them. So please know that if you decide to read these articles and to do some of the practices suggested in them, they are open source, that you can do that at any time. Please just read it first from an intellectual perspective without doing the practices, and just notice what happens in your system. It's high energy work, particularly the annihilation work. So that being said, it's about allowing, these are practices that are in service of allowing aggression to mobilize in a way that is safe and constructive and empowering for the individual. And that doesn't hurt anybody, but it is really about getting your aggression on in the case of the annihilation work. Thank you, Susan, for linking those. The annihilation work is about literally allowing yourself to imagine destroying people.

(01:12:07):

Often family members are part of this. I've completely killed my family a few times in my imagination. Everyone was fine. No one was harmed. Actually, everyone was much better for it because I was able to release the tremendous rage and aggression that was simmering under the surface in a safe way. But again, it's advanced practice. It brings in the body and the imagination. So tread carefully, please, and be mindful of your capacity. So yes, grief, deep grief, existential loss, perhaps under that tremendous rage and aggression, working with all that primal stuff. Also, you can regain a great deal of sensitivity. It'll never be the same, unfortunately, but you can regain a lot through doing various forms of internal practice. One

that was really useful for me is the Daoist approach to working with sexual energy. There's lots of teachers out there. I like Mantak Chia's book.

(01:13:12):

He's got a series of books that are very good. Actually, I have those already pulled up, so I'm going to go ahead and just link those here, because I had them ready. So he has a book, and again, yes, this is advanced. This isn't necessarily something that everyone's going to be able to do, but I'm still going to share it. It may be very useful for a lot of people. We are all individuals in different places, so it is advanced work, and if someone's in a lot of freeze or shutdown won't really have access to this. But if you can feel your sexual energy and potency and you want to work with it, this will bring greater sensitivity and enlivens to the system. At least it did for me. There's one there that's for both men and women. And then this one is just for men, and this one is just for women. And again, these will be linked on the call replay page on the site. You don't have to worry about saving it all right now, but I popped it in the chat again. Yeah, advanced practices, not for everybody, and can be very useful for a lot of people, if they're ready for it. So again, it's up to you to follow your impulse and listen to your body.

(01:14:40):

There's also lots of different practices that we get into the course, like the Feldenkrais lessons that also can improve one's sensitivity to a great degree in a global sense. So it's not like these are the only things out there. These are just things that have been useful for me in healing this precise wound, and that's why I mentioned them.

Okay. Okay. "I am a third time alumni and I've improved massively so far. Now I'm struggling with balls of energy. They get stuck in different parts of my body, now I can feel everything. These balls are annoying. It's not overwhelming, but pretty uncomfortable. They tend to last for days. The common pattern is that while sleeping, I'll have a big shake in a given area, and then the sensation moves somewhere else. Any tips on this?" So yeah, this is the classic experience of what happens when freeze is no longer really in the picture so much, and we're actually feeling all the stuff that's been in there all this time.

(01:15:47):

Yeah, that's annoying. There's many people who are like, yeah, I want my damn freeze back, man. I'm feeling too much stuff here. It's like, yeah, I hear you, but it's much better for you as

an organism to not be in freeze and to feel this painful stuff. Sorry. So this is good. This is good. What you describe, and yes, kind of annoying. Patience. Patience. It'll move through. And there's a couple of things you can do I think that will help. First is just allow it to happen. Trust the process. Know that this stuff is all moving through for a reason. Is there some element of your experience that maybe you're not including in this? Like you're describing it all as sensation. Is there an emotion? Is there an emotion that wants to come along with these sensations or that is part of expressing this ball of energy you're feeling that can help it move?

(01:16:44):

Peter has this model called SIBAM, which is an acronym, means, S - sensation, I - image, B - behavior, A - affect or emotion, and M - meaning, and this is basically the sum of our human experience, these five elements. Lots of times if we're just working with one of those elements, like the sensation, and there's other elements that are not connected, something can have a hard time completing. We need to have connection to our environment to feel the sensation, to feel our body connected to the environment, to allow any emotions to come through, to allow meaning to arise, to see if there's any images. Perhaps sometimes I'm feeling this ball. What's the color of the ball? What's the texture of the ball? What's the shape? Where is it? What happens if you see that? And then think about a different color or texture, working with all these different elements of human experience.

(01:17:50):

So that's one thing that you might check out, is there's something else that can be part of this experience of these energy balls moving through the system. Another thing that may be useful is the concept of, don't chase the sensation. So how can you stay oriented to a place where there isn't much happening in your body, where something feels relatively calm, where it's like, okay, it's kind of a neutral spot. And really stay oriented to that. And you sort of allow these other things to happen in the periphery, because something that can happen is there's a sensation, oh my God, there's a sensation right here. Now it's over here. Oh my god, now it's here. Right? We're chasing the sensation around with this sense of alarm and worry. And again, that can just keep it stuck and cycling to different places in the system. We need to be open, patient economists to the best of our degree to just observe this.

(01:18:49):

And sometimes the way we can do that best is by not paying so much attention to it, pay attention to something else that's more neutral. Keep your attention focused there. And it is like you kind of notice in your periphery, oh yeah, there's that thing there, but I'm focusing here, wherever that is. So that's another thing that may be useful. And patience. Patience. It's all happened.

Okay. "I struggle a lot with anxiety. Just thinking of vacation, five years with SBSM has improved it, but going to Portugal this summer scares me. I've had a lot of anxiety before when traveling, how to work on this. I want to feel joy. Anxiety comes every time when we're on holiday, especially when we're going to land, like Crete or Spain. Please help. I can't relax." Oh, okay. First question for you is do you actually want to go on vacation?

(01:19:42):

That's something that you may not even be considering. Do you want to travel? Is that something you actually want to do? Have you considered, what would it be like to take that time you have set aside to travel and just chill out at home? I don't know. Sometimes maybe that's not the case at all, but sometimes people won't even consider this, right? Oh, maybe I don't even actually want to do that, and that's why I'm feeling all this stuff around it. My body doesn't want to get on an airplane and fly to Portugal. I just want to be cozy and stay home, in the context of trauma healing. That's a thing. Or maybe not, but I just want to put it out there now. I hear you. You want to feel joy, you want to feel relaxed. You're going on vacation.

(01:20:29):

Unfortunately, from my experience, joy isn't happiness. Joy is the ability to feel what is actually happening. To be able to feel the full spectrum of human experience in its totality, being in a joyous state from my perspective means I can feel what's happening and it can process through my system, and I can be present with it. And that's my human experience in this moment. It's not really so much about like I'm happy, right? Happiness is a weird thing. It doesn't even really exist in the terms of it being something we can achieve. It is something that happens when we're in the moment and present and we have meaning in our lives. That's what brings a sense of happiness. So wanting to feel something that you're not feeling is a sure way to not feel happiness or joy. We need to feel what is, even if it's painful. And that's what allows us to feel a deeper sense of joy. So sorry, that kind of sucks, but that is what I've discovered.

(01:21:44):

Relaxation, again, it comes through being able to be with and have the capacity for what we're experiencing. If something's outside our capacity to process, it'll be impossible to relax. So again, is this concept of going on holiday to Portugal, is that within your capacity? Can you stay present to what you're really feeling in the moment as you do that? And if not, maybe it's not something you need to do right now. Maybe it'd be better to do something different, I don't know. But it's about staying present to what is, which means you have to feel the anxiety, you have to allow it to move through your system, use your somatic tools, use your resources to soothe and settle, if that's what feels appropriate. But trying to avoid it, wanting to feel something else, generally won't go anywhere productive. So that sucks. I hear you.

(01:22:41):

I don't like traveling. I'm about to get on a plane this afternoon and yeah, I'm not a huge fan. So yeah, I was feeling a bunch of nervousness and anxiety yesterday and like, yep, I'm just going to feel this and process it and be with it. Now I'm going to see myself on the plane and okay, yeah, I'm feeling this, all right. I'm going to just let myself have this experience. I'm going to let my heart rate increase. I'm going to feel the tension. I'm going to orient to where I am now and be present and just allow this to move through.

(01:23:15):

Okay, last question. Okay. "Can you please give an example of internal resources from your own life? I'm imagining an internal resource might be like an exercise from the course or a phrase I tell myself, or a memory, or following my breath. Am I on the right track?" So yeah, internal resources, again, a true internal resource is something that allows us to be with what we are experiencing and to stay present and allow it to process. For me, some of the big ones I learned early on were tracking sensation, allowing emotional expression. Those were back in my bad old days of emotional healing, before I discovered nervous system work, when I was on the hardcore meditator vibe, doing lots of Upasana retreats. So I had a super refined ability to track sensation at a fine level, which was really useful later on, at the time. It just supported me to be more spiritually bypassed and to just completely ignore what I was unaware of, and didn't know I was doing that.

(01:24:24):

So, but like I said, this is the old days. Emotional expression, I did a lot of that early on, just allowing, I literally lived in a tent in the jungle in Hawaii for quite a while, just being homeless and following my impulse, because I only wanted to process my trauma. I didn't want to do anything else. So yeah, rolling around in the tent, making all sorts of weird sounds, movements, being animalistic, oftentimes in too cathartic a way, because again, I didn't have the nervous system lens, I didn't have the trauma lens, but those early pieces of learning were really useful later on, as I got into this more refined work. So yeah, I can track sensation really well. I can allow whatever I find to come through in some form of expression, sound, movement, all that's no sweat. Those are big internal resources for me. And that's an example of an internal resource for anyone. The ability to track, the ability to notice your breath without changing it. That's a big one in the context of this work. Just let it be what it is without changing it. What happens next?

(01:25:37):

Mantras, things we say to ourself. Affirmations, yeah, sure, that can be a resource. It's not really from the somatic school, but that's totally fine. There's all sorts of valid ways of being and healing, and that's an internal thing, focusing on a memory that's positive. Sure. Even more powerful. Can you focus on the felt sense of that memory? That's powerful, right? Can you drop into a good memory and notice how does your body respond? What are the sensations and emotions of that memory in a felt sense way is even more powerful. So yeah, those are all forms of internal resource. Absolutely.

Alright, thanks so much everybody. Really good to see you. So I will be back again in a few calls. Like I said, I'm getting on a plane and we're going over to teach in Europe for a few weeks. I will be back. And in the meantime, enjoy, really happy to be with you all, and I'll see you again soon. Okay. Bye now.