

Curated Q&A Call #3 with Rebecca and Jen

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JEN: Here with Ari, who is taking care of many things, including things like making us co-host and recording our call today. And then Leah is also here somewhere. I saw her and then I didn't, but Leah is here and she will be in the chat. And, hi Leah. There you are. And so the chat, just to be clear, the chat is fun. Things at the beginning, to look, kind of connect around, things like resources, and then it's really for things specific to the call. So if you heard something and you didn't quite get it or it wasn't clear to you, then that's really what the chat on these calls is for. If you have a, let's say, you're listening and it sparks a question about something different, then that would be a great thing to jot down. And you can ask either in the general questions area of the SmartBody SmartMind website, or you could submit it to one of the upcoming calls. So just to, yeah. Okay. So I see lots of familiar faces, some new faces. I'm Jen, I'm a team member who's been around helping out with SBSM for a number of years now, and I'm a somatic experiencing practitioner, and a movement teacher who is especially passionate about what most people call early developmental trauma. Rebecca, would you like to say hello? Hello?

(00:01:38):

So I need to say, too, it's March 27th, and this is the Q and A Call, Number Three.

(00:01:44):

REBECCA: Thank you.

(00:01:48):

JEN: We can do it together.

(00:01:52):

REBECCA: So I'm Rebecca Roman, and I've been on the team line since 2020, moderating, and I am a somatic experiencing practitioner. I have my own practice here in Detroit, Michigan, and I am a Feldenkrais practitioner and longtime yoga teacher practitioner. I don't really do that much anymore, and German, new medicine, I'm getting into that as well. So yeah, it's a little

bit about me. I'm happy to be here. I'm a little nervous. I'm just still getting used to this whole interface. I do work with people one-on-one online, but this is just different.

(00:02:42):

JEN: Thanks, Rebecca.

(00:02:44):

Nerves. Welcome. I have them too. They are getting less, but I have 'em. And the one thing I'll share with y'all before I turn over to Rebecca for the first sort of question is that the questions today really fell into three main categories at a high level, and there were a few questions that were sort of like, will this work help with this thing? Or I've noticed this happening, could that be the work? So that's kind of one category where we had a few questions, then we had a few questions that were like, how do I know if I'm doing too much? How do I make a decision now that I'm aware of this work? So how do I know, how do I decide, category? We had a few of those and then we had a lot of how do I work with X? So this thing is happening or this thing happened, how do I work with that? So that sort of gives you a broad overview of where we'll be exploring together today, starting with Rebecca. And is this work, is this the work or question mark?

(00:03:59):

REBECCA: Okay, so I'm just going to read what this member wrote. So, "I love Q and A, it's become my resource. I think it's my sixth round. Never got to the end, always got stuck somewhere around lab six. I'm at the point where I'm able to open, I'm able to own up to my own experiences. I feel like before it was all covered in shame, hiding. I hope it's a sign of healing." So there isn't a direct question here, but yes, this represents healing in the sense of shifting out of stress, physiology and capacity, because as you're saying, you're able to be in your own experience and that is sort of a way of just summing up what we're doing here and cultivating the ability to be able to do the pool analogy that Irene gives. So it sounds like there is growth, like the pool has grown, and health is being able to be with, so things can flow and move the balls out, so things flow better. So yes, happy to hear it.

(00:05:15):

JEN: Alright, thank you.

(00:05:18):

The next one also in this category, someone shares that they suffered from headaches and migraines for a long time. A couple of years ago they went to get chiropractic adjustments a few times, and when they got the adjustment, it would help but it wouldn't stick. And the chiropractor told this person that their weak constitution is the problem, so I'm sorry about that. That sounds unpleasant. That obviously wasn't the case. And they say they share that now after doing this nervous system work for two years, I went to an osteopath, he did the same adjustments and my headaches are now completely gone. I am shocked. Do you think there is a connection to this nervous system work? And the short answer, similar to what Rebecca just shared is yes, absolutely. So when we're living in survival, right, we're basically getting these signals that say pay attention, pay attention, pay attention.

(00:06:20):

And sometimes we'll hear something's wrong, something's wrong, something's wrong. And so if that's sort of the baseline that we continue to go back to, and that's sort of where we've been living for a while. If we go to get an adjustment, our system might sort of be invited into this new experience, or we might be invited into this experience of greater ease, and we're like, but then our system's like, whoa, wait a minute, I don't know if I know this place I need to go back to, I need to go back to what I know. I need to be paying attention to whether there's something wrong, whether there's something that I need to be looking out for. But as you do this work and you grow more access to the physiologies that support the ability to just kind of hang out and be okay, and you also grow, those are the same physiologies that support healing and regeneration and revitalization, then a lot of times we find and we hear that the same type of work, other modalities tend to land differently.

(00:07:24):

Often we might notice more benefits and they can tend to stick more. The benefits tend to stick more. Sometimes I will add, we might find that actually that thing I used to do all the time, like you mentioned yoga, Rebecca, I also taught yoga for a long time. We might find that actually, you know what, that doesn't feel so good to me anymore. So it can go both ways, but generally speaking you become more receptive to change, right? Because before we grow the access to just everything might just be okay. Right now in this moment where I'm sitting in my room before we grow access to that change often reads as a threat. So internal change,

external change can read as a threat, and so we tend to sort of go back to what we know. So short answer, I said a little bit more there, but the short answer is yes, it could absolutely be this work. And then I will turn it back to you, Rebecca.

(00:08:26):

REBECCA: Okay. Okay. So with this question, “Are physical clearances such as bowel clearances after healing work, a sign that my nervous system has been pushed too far? Bowel movements are a barometer for stress but also can react after healing sessions. Not SBSM. The wellness world sells this response as positive, but I'm wondering if it's a sign of dysregulation instead.” So I can't say for sure that it is a sign of dysregulation or not, but I invite you to tune into your impulses. First and foremost is to keep working with that to discover if this might be too much. This is a big part of this work in developing a new understanding of what might be too much for us, compared to historically what's enough. And generally the bowel clearances would be a way that there is sympathetic activation in the system presenting. So I get curious if there's healing practices that you're doing, and you said they're not SBSM, how they're influencing you. So it might be helpful to just notice what's happening, what's changing in your system beyond the digestive movement, and how do you feel afterwards? Do you feel amped up? Do you feel exhausted or more shut down or do you feel just more at ease? So tracking that can help figure out if it's too much and if it's all the time.

(00:10:21):

And I would also suggest perhaps bringing in the basics that you're learning in SBSM to the other healing work, just to help titrate and integrate whatever that healing work is. And again, the building of capacity and figuring out what might be enough or too much is just something that can take time. Yeah. Do you have anything to add to that, Jen?

(00:10:48):

JEN: The only thing that I might add, Rebecca, which is actually just kind of expanding on something you said, is that it can be helpful to notice what's happening relative to what we might be used to. So this might be if someone, let's say, runs really constipated and all of a sudden they're noticing more bowel movements, then they might be starting to have more access to the peristaltic movement, it might be coming online a bit more. And if that's going to happen and we haven't had a bowel movement in a while, then there could be an excuse, pun,

but a big dump. So yeah, the only thing that I might say is to look relative to what might also offer some clues.

(00:11:36):

REBECCA: All right, am I going for the next one?

(00:11:38):

JEN: You are, yeah, that's all you.

(00:11:40):

REBECCA: So, "I find myself unconsciously asking permission of my dad to do this work. His response triggers the pain of not feeling loved, seen. Will there be a time that I will be capable of communicating to him without being so easily triggered, or maybe without the expectation that they have to understand me? And is this SBSM also going to help me learn to give worth and love to myself, and not rely on the validation of others?" So the short answer is yes to all of that. It's definitely possible to be less triggered, to have less expectation, and to cultivate real self worth and self validation. And the program, this work is really curated to provide the conditions and the processes to develop that within yourself, by working with the physiology and developing just a clear interoception of self, a neuroception, which is that felt sense of safety, and that is really the foundation to then respond, be able to respond differently, even to someone like your caretaker or your dad, to have self-worth, to validate yourself.

(00:13:07):

This does have to come back to yourself. It's understandable that because of how we develop as humans, as mammals, our caretakers, we rely on them. That's part of the attunement. We rely on our caretakers to validate us, and this is what helps to grow a sense of self-worth and validation. But sometimes that's not always there. And then there can be the wound, right? Like you said, the pain of not feeling loved or seen and doing this work is a way of tuning into that wound and feeling it. So processing what might be there, which will free up your system so you can respond to your dad differently, as well as perhaps refining what you've made that mean. Sometimes we make that mean something, that we're not loved, that dad doesn't love me, that might not necessarily be true, although that's what that feels like, which is why we

work with the body and the physiology, rather than just change your perception or just change your thought or just affirm yourself, you're loved, you're worthy.

(00:14:24):

It's like, what does that actually mean and feel like for you, and having access to that way of being or that physiology, it might also, while doing this right now, be helpful to see if you can take a little space maybe from talking about it with your dad, tuning into maybe other people that you feel that that is easier with or that you connect with. It can even just be tuning into the other members on SBSM, if you have a spiritual connection, if you have, it can be female or male, but like a friend or a partner to look to for that. And again, it's not about relying on someone else for it, but we do connect with each other and we do do a lot of healing and relationship, but it doesn't have to come from your dad.

(00:15:25):

Try not to say - this one is very familiar to me, because I've experienced this quite a bit, and just a quick little story. I think it was my second round, I had started my SE training, and I had just gotten back and I felt so, my gosh, I got this doing this work, and I'm healed, and I invite my dad over to help me with curtains, and he totally barked at me and yelled at me, and then I just reacted and it was like all of that went out the window, but I just wasn't ready and I felt extra triggered. So sometimes when we're doing this work and creating more movement and awareness in our system, we actually can be a little more sensitive and triggered. And so that was a cue for me. Don't invite dad over to help or talk to him about stuff. But now with my dad, it's very different and I have a very authentic understanding of how he is versus, I'm wounded, he doesn't say or do or whatever. So I hope that helps. Great. Jen.

(00:16:45):

JEN: Alright. Yeah. Before we go to the next section, I just want to offer the reminder that being on these calls can be a great opportunity to practice what you're learning in SBSM. So feeling your back against the chair or the couch, if you're leaning on something, or your feet on the ground, if it feels nice, I have some tea and some water here, to notice your resource. If you have an impulse to look away or to get up and move, or if you start to feel sleepy and you want to drop off the call, just really practicing what you're learning here can be a great way to continue to weave it into your daily life.

So with that, we will go to the next section, which is, how do I know if or how do I decide something? And so the first person, an alum and they say “this work has transformed my life and I know how valuable the practices are.” Yay for that. That's exciting. Then they go on to say that “I was in a very good routine of practicing the lessons, but in the last month or so I've had massive resistance to even starting the lessons or doing any practice. Is this potentially my body telling me to take a break from practicing, or is it something that I should do regardless of all the resistance I feel?” Thank you. Okay, so there's a few things here. I think first I'll start with just generally, that we do need time along the way to integrate.

(00:18:37):

So if we do this work over time, most of us actually start to experience ourselves very differently. We can start to think differently, we can start to see differently. It's a big change. And so it's kind of like if you were to move into a new neighborhood, most of us would want to take some time to get to know where the coffee shop is and where the park is and just get to find our way around. And it can be that way as we grow a new layer of capacity and regulation, or move a big experience through, to just let ourselves be there and experience it without digging deeper, and diving deeper, and creating the conditions that might invite something else to come up. So generally speaking, it can be very helpful to rest and integrate, but also when we're creating new connections, if you think about little kids, how much they sleep, it's like we need rest to help us to make those new connections.

(00:19:37):

So generally speaking, that can be important. In your case here, is it my body telling me to take a break or should I do it regardless of the resistance? So what I would say for sure is don't do it regardless of the resistance, but you could explore. If we're not sure about something, we can always experiment. This work has a lot to do with experimenting. So if you're not sure if it'd be helpful to take a break, then take a break and see what happens. And you might find like, wow, it feels so good to take a break and I'm sleeping better. And or you might sort of feel like, you know what? There's something else going on here. And so then you'd get some information there. Okay, there is something that's actually keeping me from wanting to engage and when that's the case, we can apply the same principles to working with that.

(00:20:39):

So what that might look like is, as I just start to think about opening the website, does something happen inside of me? And depending on you and your capacity and everything, you might sort of titrate more. You might start to think about, starting to think about, starting to think about, or you might titrate less, you might actually go to your computer and sort of act as if you're going to open a practice. It's sort of, what experience will kind of tap into a level of activation that is appropriate for your current capacity, and lets you hear yourself and be with what's happening. So that could be a way to work with it. Resistance sometimes, if it is resistance, there can be things held in the resistance. Often there is healthy aggression held in resistance, and so that can be a way to explore. There is a resource, let me find the name of it right here.

(00:21:45):

There's a resource that is, I have it here, but now I can't see it. There's a resource about working with the four steps to working with resistance, or something like that. So if you wouldn't mind popping that in the chat, that would be great. And if you're interested you can check that out. There's also actually the pregame videos would be the place to start, and the other links are on the pregame video page, because one of the first pregame videos is about working with resistance, and yeah, so that will be great for later. The spark up, the social engagement, this one's more specific to resistance. So yeah, there we go. Pregame feeling and working resistance. And if you go there you'll find the other resistance practices. Let me just see here.

(00:22:38):

Yeah, so we're always looking. The other thing, I'll just add one more thing is that we're always looking, Rebecca, you mentioned this earlier, we're always looking at what else is happening? Am I thinking about going to do a practice? And generally speaking, I'm feeling, like, pretty settled in my life. I feel pretty like, wow, there's a growing sense of ease. I'm like, wow, things are flowing. Then that might be like, oh, I just kind of want to hang out here. If I actually feel a little angsty, my sleep is off, there's things going on then that not wanting to engage with the practices might be a way that I can keep my distance from what's bubbling up inside. So looking at what the other things that are happening can also give us clues. So we'll keep coming back to that, because it's an important one, but that is that question. And then I'm going to answer one more before I turn it back to you, Rebecca. So this is also in that category of how do I know, they say "Hi there, I am doing healthy aggression work. The last two years,"

if you're new, you may not be familiar with healthy aggression work. You'll learn about it in the coming weeks, like lab five and six or six and seven. I'll check, while Rebecca is talking, and let you know for sure.

(00:24:08):

So, it's coming up. So what they do is, when they have an unwelcome thought, they use a towel, which is a way of working with healthy aggression. And they're saying that they do that four or five times a day, and they're asking if that's too much. So is doing this towel thing to express healthy aggression four or five times a day too much? And how do I know if it's too much, because I still don't know too much about my capacity. So first just remember that to find and discover our capacity, we need to experiment, and then we see what we notice. And so in this case, to you, I would say, so you're doing it four or five times a day, if you're doing that, what we want to look for is something changing. So is something changing when you go to express the healthy aggression, do you feel stronger or more powerful?

(00:25:12):

Is your jaw starting to get involved where it wasn't before? Or do you feel more of you wanting to get into the movement? Is something changing outside of the practice? Do you feel like those thoughts that you're working with, are they dissipating? Are they maybe a little less loud or less frequent or even more loud? So we're looking for is something different, if nothing's changing, just to be clear, it can still feel good just to get stuff out, because a lot of us who find this work as adults have held things in a lot of our life, and so there can still be benefited just grabbing a towel or whatever that looks like. And then in terms of these responses that we work with, we might need to titrate a bit more. So if nothing's changing, titrating more can be a way to listen in more detail and to see if maybe there's something else that wants to happen.

(00:26:12):

Very often when people move towards healthy aggression, it can first just feel really good to get it out, and then as we slow down and we start to pay more attention, we might notice like, oh, if I go really slowly and I just start to think about moving towards ringing that towel, my gut actually gets really tight or my breath stops, right, my shoulders are coming forward. So when that happens, we actually want to pause and make space for those things first. So we would apply what you're learning. I notice a tension to my gut. I might take my hand and place my hand on my gut. I might lean back and feel the back support behind me. As I'm doing that, my

shoulders are dropping, and then I'm noticing, oh, my jaw wants to get involved, and now my belly softening, I'm dropping a little bit, and my voice quality is changing, so that titration can really help us to listen in more detail.

(00:27:26):

The other thing that might happen as we listen in more detail over time is that we might realize that part of this movement we're making with the towel, right, we might realize that there's something else that wants to happen there, specific to the healthy aggression movement. And so let's say my movement was punching. I am going to punch this way so you don't feel like I'm punching at you, but let's say I'm like, I'm so pissed. I'm so pissed at my dad and I'm sort of doing this and it feels good. But let's say I do that for a while and nothing changes, then what I might do is like, okay, I go to think and okay, my belly doesn't get tight. I'm pretty open in here. But as I sort of listen, I actually notice my shoulder really wants to lift up, and my face wants to grimace, and I want to lean.

(00:28:23):

And those are things that I was missing when I was just going for the punch. So often if we do something for a while, nothing's changing, then it can really be an opportunity to listen in more detail and notice what else might want to happen. So let me just see here. Yeah. Oh, and the other thing. Yeah, thanks, Rebecca. You mentioned this sometimes too, we can use expression as a way to cope, which is different to working with those held responses and really kind of expressing something. So sometimes, let's say there's many examples, but one is let's say I have a lot of grief, but I really don't want to feel it. This may not be conscious. I might just go to anger a lot of the time and just be like, I'm just going to, so as I slow down, another thing I might discover is like, oh, actually I feel a lot of grief or I feel some fear. So we can use it too as a coping strategy, and a way to not potentially feel other things that might be bubbling up. Do you want to add anything to that, Rebecca?

(00:29:44):

REBECCA: No, I think that was it. That was that last piece. Yeah. Perfect.

(00:29:52):

JEN: All right, over to you.

(00:29:55):

REBECCA: Okay. All right. So, "Now that summer is coming. I feel pressured to remove my body hair, which I've done for years now since starting this work. I don't want to put my poor body through the pain and bracing of waxing, but I can't shave either, because it leaves me super itchy and rashy. I'm not comfortable going out in my bikini with dark Italian hair. Any insights regarding this work and my insecurity would be helpful." So there's a couple ways of approaching this. One possibility is exploring with shifting. You mentioned feeling pressure. So feeling pressure that you need to remove the body hair and that there's this pressure that has something to do with other people. I would imagine if there weren't people, there wouldn't be that pressure. It's this relational thing about being seen with the hair. So you can work with the feeling of the pressure.

(00:31:07):

What do you notice in your system when you tune into that? Maybe just imagining going and I have to go get a wax. And what is that pressure like in your system, and what might it want to do? What might happen with that to also see if there can be, then maybe this can become a choice, right? Because you can choose to go get waxed or not depending on how you approach it. And there could be a choice to do that, because you are doing something that is even a form of self-care. Maybe you like how it feels or how it looks, regardless of others, to not have hair. And so how does that land, how that feels in your system, that perspective to be doing something that you like for yourself versus there's pressure to do it if you want. And I hear that not wanting to care, feeling so comfortable with yourself that you don't care about other people seeing you.

(00:32:21):

You could titrate towards that. So perhaps you're going to go somewhere where you would wear a bikini, maybe you wear little shorts, or you have a sarong on initially, and you see how that feels. You can't even imagine doing that beforehand, and see what comes up in your system, and work with it and notice what is there, what is it about other people seeing you with the hair? And can that transform into just a sense of ease, just I'm okay with this or I'm not, right? And then that might help you differentiate. Do I actually want to wax or not, personally? And I've waxed before so I know how it can feel, but personally I have gray hair. I was telling Jen the other day, I'm not ready. I wish I was in a way to let my gray hair grow out,

but I'm just not ready. So when I go get my hair colored, I just try to look at it as like, this is fun. I'm getting my hair painted. I like the color of my hair, and that's okay. Versus feeling bad about it or I'm hiding.

(00:33:41):

But my armpit hair, I'm like, that's fine with me. Armpit hair all day long. I am done shaving it. So there sort of seems to be a theme here too, with what Jen's bringing up with experimenting. You can experiment here and see what happens. The other piece is, let's say you want to do the waxing, the way you approach the waxing, getting a waxing does not necessarily have to retraumatize you. So you can use what you're learning here in SBSM to support you, right? You're there, you're orienting, you have a resource with you. Perhaps you're feeling your body there and it's pretty short-lived, right? Maybe you brace a little, maybe you do something different with your breathing, and it's like, can there be a little bit of that stress that comes in from the waxing? And then can you come back to baseline? It sounds like there's a concern of maybe you wouldn't like being re-traumatized, but as we're building capacity, we're able to be with things.

Because it's not like in life there never will be some kind of stimuli or something where we might be a little stressed or we might even have to override a little bit. And then it's, can we come back to some kind of homeostasis? I think, about, in lab six, I'm not sure if you're an alum or not, but coming up in lab six, the painful and pleasant lesson could be helpful. And even when doing something like waxing, can you notice where in your body, where that's not happening? I know these are some things I work with when I go to the dentist, or if I have some kind of procedure, or when I've done acupuncture initially, acupuncture feels great, but for me, not when they're putting in the needles. So yeah, anything you want to add to that, Jen?

(00:35:45):

JEN: I think you mostly covered it. Just the importance, just to highlight what you said about a lot of this is about our relationship with ourselves, right? And not all, but many of us come into this work with a lot of self-judgment and this belief that if I do the right thing then something, then there'll be a good thing that happens. If I do the wrong thing, then a bad thing will happen. And so just to start to explore what other possibilities might be like. And that may take some time if we've been used to beating ourselves up for 50, 60, 70 years. It is not like some of

these things where I was just aware as I was listening to you, Rebecca, that some of these things, we're talking about experimentation at first. For some of us, say, it might be really tough, but just to notice there are things that we can work towards, and that relationship with self peace is really essential to everything that we're doing here. Yeah, makes sense? Yes. Alright. You okay if I keep going?

(00:36:57):

REBECCA: Yeah.

(00:36:58):

JEN: Okay. So now we're moving into the last section, which is our most robust section of the day, wherever in the day you happen to be. And so this is the "how do I work with" section. And so we're starting with a question, where someone says, "This is my second round of SmartBody SmartMind. I am more able to regulate myself throughout the days now. I still struggle in social settings. I try to stay grounded and oriented, but when I get engaged in a conversation, I forget everything and then I need to use hours after to calm down the sympathetic activation. So how can I help myself stay more regulated in social settings?" So first of all, great to hear that you're noticing changes that you've been creating for yourself. I hesitate whether to share this, but I think I need to because it comes up a lot. I see it all the time. So just so you know, whoever wrote this question, you're in very good company. Actually. I have a family member who does this a lot. And so a lot of times we use the term regulate myself. A lot of us say that I regulate myself.

(00:38:18):

The way we tend to think about it here in this community that you're a part of is that regulation is more about our more automatic physiologic response. So right now as I'm talking to you, I am using some sympathetic, we're always using sympathetic to sit up and to talk and do those things. I honestly am probably using a little more than I need to because I'm still kind of working through my nerves. So I have a little excess sympathetic. I do also have some ventral because I feel connected to you all. I'm also really feeling, it's such a beautiful day here. I'm outside of Philadelphia right now, and the sun is out, and there's a light breeze, and I can see a tree blossoming behind my screen, behind all of you.

(00:39:13):

I have my pup here who's keeping me company, and my belly was rumbling. I sort of had something to eat earlier. My belly is gurgling, which kind of gives me a little clue that that lower tone dorsal is happening, but by the point that I got a little distracted there, or I sort of went on a long winding road. But the point is that those things are happening automatically. If I take a moment, just that moment, my body dropped. So I'd say that was a mix of me kind of consciously creating the conditions where my system and my physiology could settle a little bit more, could get a little heavier, but regulation tends to be more of ours, just sort of what our physiology is doing, our automatic response, and it's something that we're creating the conditions, what we're all learning together is how to create the conditions to grow regulation and grow capacity. When we consciously, let's say I'm feeling really nervous. Before this call I made some time just to really walk outside, feel the sun, and I trembled a little bit, right?

(00:40:31):

That's more like I might say I'm supporting my innate ability to regulate, but really I'm taking steps to move in the direction of settling. So I'm settling, I'm turning towards a resource, I'm doing all those things. And then all those things help us to keep growing regulation and capacity. So it's a bit nuanced. Irene has a resource. I'll try and find it while you're talking next time, Rebecca, to pop it in, to kind of see if we can pop in the chat. Maybe you know what, the regulation versus relaxation might be a good one, Irene has a resource about, I didn't put it in the list, sorry. But the regulation versus relaxation could be a good one there. Yeah. So hopefully that's clear. If not, don't worry. It will become clear. But we just hear it all the time. I hear it, in the work, and also in my life. And so I wanted to share that. So going back to this question, I just want to affirm that things are changing, and with this work, especially if you're having these experiences with people, there's a good chance they started way back. And so especially if we're working with lifelong patterns, it takes time. So just know that part of this might be to continue to do what you're doing.

(00:41:54):

The other thing that feels important here is that it feels like there might be quite an extreme difference between when you're on your own, and you can take a moment and feel the ground, maybe offer yourself some squeezes, look out the window, between that and your response, and how you feel. And then your experience when you're with people in conversation where you said you tend to get overwhelmed to the point where, let me use your words here, to the point where you forget everything and then it takes hours afterwards to

calm down. So those sound like pretty two ends of a polarity, right? Two ends of a spectrum. And something that can happen in this work a lot is when we have a lot of influence of survival or trauma in our system, we tend to hang out more on the ends of the spectrum.

(00:43:00):

The poles are what we call hanging out polarity. But if you think about it, if this is a spectrum, there's also all of this space in here to explore, but we might tend to go here or here or here or here, good, bad, black, white. And so one thing that you might explore is what's it like to just move a little bit towards conversation? And that could look like imagining a conversation. It could look like talking to a tree, it could be talking to yourself in a mirror or in a journal. So sort of exploring different ways to be in conversation might help you to see what happens in this setting, but in a way that you can stay more present and notice what's happening in more detail. So that's one thing, is to titrate more, titrate a bit more so you can find that middle ground, which might allow you to access the response that happens or the reaction in a way that's more workable. Yeah, the other thing is that when you're there with the person, you might plan ahead. So if we know that we tend to go offline, I know this, I spent a lot of time way offline, so I know it well. So if we know that we go offline, we might plan ahead. And that could look like putting a reminder on our phone. It could look like if, let's say we like to rub little rocks, we could put one in our pocket before we leave.

(00:44:39):

If we're fortunate to have a good enough friend that we can tell them what's going on, we could sort of ask for their help. Like, Hey, could you let me know it's been 15 minutes and I might need to go outside and take a breath. So planning ahead can be helpful. And then things that you might do in that setting are, one you might look at, do I spend, do, when I go on a social engagement or social date, do I actually go for an hour instead of five hours? Whatever your timeframe is, you might look at would it be helpful to shorten it? Would it be helpful to do it a little less frequently? You might look at whether your response is different with different people. So really start, going back to our theme today, experiment and see what you notice. And then knowing too that remembering that under that freeze, and you're saying this, there's a lot of sympathetic energy, and so while you're with the person, can you make a habit of, can let your foot tap under the table, or you could squeeze your fingers like mini containment, and you could do that under the table.

(00:45:58):

I don't think you have to hide these things, but some people are self-conscious, so if you're self-conscious, you could do these things under the table. You could get up and go to the bathroom, get up and get some water, get up and go outside. So really kind of looking at and maybe planning in advance, how can I find ways to let myself move and express while I'm with the person, so that things don't get so pent up to the point where it takes me hours after. So I think I covered everything that I wanted to cover. Did you want to add anything there, Rebecca?

(00:46:37):

REBECCA: No, I think that's it. You were mentioning it, just, resources, when you mentioned the rock, or a friend, that you can tell, just how we resource and orient, to be able to be with the experience, which is in essence what Jen is saying.

(00:46:57):

JEN: It could even be the place we choose. I know for me, some places I feel a lot more settled at than other places, so could we meet in the park? Things like that you can think about. Thank you. Great point over to you.

(00:47:10):

REBECCA: And I think sometimes too, if it's a sitting situation, we get accustomed to, when we sit, that we just have to sit. And I'm not saying you have to gyrate all over, but even here on this call, I often, I mean, when I said, sometimes, I'm shifting, swaying a little bit. So as Jen was saying, with tapping the foot or something, how you can move a little bit and just kind of be with that sympathetic energy, but not that it's all over, or you might get up, and you can see this sometimes in folks that might, if someone is fidgeting or getting up and down a lot, that's really what that's about, to a degree. So there can be a way to contain it, but yet not pushing it down, to then be able to be present with what it is you want to do. If that's what you want to do, is be there with folks.

(00:48:14):

Okay, I'm next. Yeah. All right. So this question, "After being engaged in an abusive relationship as an adult, I have some subconscious reaction during sleep, during sleeping, to scratch myself.

Sometimes this wakes me up, feeling pain. The intensity of the reaction lessened as I'm participating in your courses, but is still present. I wonder if I'm still not aware of some elements of the SIBAM that keep perpetuating the reaction, or if there's an incomplete procedural memory and I'm not aware of it. What is your advice on this dynamic? I also have a history of early developmental trauma." So I first want to mention that, to notice, and that's great that you are sensing that this reaction has lessened, and that might be valuable, to just tune in a little bit more about what that means, what that might feel like, that it's lessened, that it isn't intense, or that it doesn't happen as often.

(00:49:26):

And how else that echoes in your system, like in your day, the quality of your sleep, because that's suggesting that there's a difference, right? It's a different physiology because the scratching is sympathetic. That can be a form of aggression. It's just that it's being directed towards yourself. So then a way to work with it can be to direct that movement, that behavior, that aggression outward. That could be that you maybe you scratch a pillow or you do something with your hands, the squeezing of the towel, like in healthy aggression work, there might be a sound to it. And so I'm going to be getting into the idea, then, of the SIBAM.

(00:50:26):

So, SIBAM was created by Dr. Peter Levine. It's a phrase that he coined that works with the elements that form our whole experience. Sometimes we have more access to some of those elements more than others, as we bring them together. There can be greater completion of stress responses and more integration. And what those are, why it's SIBAM, is, the S is sensation, the I is image, which can also become memory. Then there's the B for behavior. A is affect, emotion, and M is for meaning. And sometimes we have more access to some of those, more than others. So in this case, you can specifically work with them. They don't have to go, necessarily, in that order. But as you notice, if you were to wake up and you notice that you want to scratch, or that you did, what is the sensation? What does it feel like?

(00:51:34):

What does it feel like without scratching it, maybe? Or if you were even just to touch where you feel the itch, and listen and then see, and I'm going to go here, in the order, is there an image that comes up, something that you see internally as you're listening to the sensation, which might lead you into some procedural memory, some memory of some kind, and then

maybe a different behavior. Maybe there is a movement or a different behavior or a sound, for example, that wants to emerge rather than just the scratching with the affect, the emotion, noticing if there's an emotion, which is often a collection of sensations, and being present to that, there could be a meaning, something arises, a new perspective, a thought, an idea about what happened about the itchiness in general. Speaking of itchy, I feel a little itchy in my throat right now.

(00:52:49):

So that would be a way of working with the SIBAM. And this can take time, and you can always go back to it. And this could also be something you explore during the day. So often when we're experiencing things at night, it can help in the day to approach it. Now maybe you don't necessarily feel the itchiness, but you could imagine it. What is that like when I wake up, and I feel that sense to scratch, or I realize that I did, and there's pain, and work with the SIBAM in the day, and see what happens.

(00:53:27):

You also mentioned the early developmental trauma piece. So if you consider how might you be towards a child that felt itchy, and soothing, and connection, and there's pain, how might you attune and connect with a child? Can you do that with yourself? Lab six offers great practices to help do this, and then even specifically the layers lesson, and working with the skin, and as well as the resource, there's a video Irene did, along with all the resources we have on SBSM, and the special topics Jen has done on early developmental trauma. But there's a video, 10 things to know about early trauma, that might be helpful to you, and it's nice and concise, and not too long. Yeah, anything you want to add there, Jen?

JEN: Nope. Sounds good, Rebecca.

REBECCA: Okay. All right. So, next one.

(00:54:39):

I'm going to take a little sip of water though, because it's a little itchy. Okay, so the next one, "I usually sleep through the night, but I wake up exhausted. And when I look at my Garmin watch, my stress levels are really high during sleep, often higher than during the day. I'm wondering if it's possible for the stress response to complete while we're asleep, or would it be better to try

to wake myself up, and see if I can complete it then?" So, overall, stress responses can work out or complete to a degree with sleep. That's often what's going on in dream states. And when we have dreams, things are working through the subconscious. I don't think you necessarily need to wake yourself up. So if you really are sleeping through the night, but you're saying you feel exhausted, so, I'm thinking that there's freeze happening.

(00:55:52):

This is dual states, the sympathetic and the freeze coming on. So you're sleeping. If this was just purely sympathetic, you would probably wake up. So I'm not super familiar with the Garmin watch and how it is tracking your stress levels, and I know that can be useful. You may want to explore with, experiment with when not wearing it, sometimes, see what you notice when you don't wear it, when you just don't have that input, or even a little bit through the day. And I know you're not awake when you're sleeping, you're not sensing yourself the way we are when we're awake, but just to see what the quality of the sleep is, just by how you feel the next day without necessarily wearing the watch. Same thing with the day, and just experiment wearing it, not wearing it in the day. Again, as we're dealing with sleep, it's like how are we doing our day, working with the activation in the day?

(00:56:54):

Do you notice sympathetic? Do you notice some activation? How can you work with that and then settle using the tools that you're learning here in SBSM? And then also what's it like to rest in the day, to try to get into some low tone parasympathetic? And that could happen by the assistance of some of the practices, and SBSM, or whatever you might do to rest, or even take a little nap and see what you notice, and then even wear the watch to see what it says, as well as how you feel afterward. Do you feel rejuvenated, present, or do you feel the exhaustion, which would indicate that there's more of a freeze that happened? So as Jen was mentioning earlier with regulation, we just want more access to these physiological states, and it's common that we can put dysregulation in sleep to be in a free state, or to not be able to sleep and have more sympathetic coming up. I apologize. So also a sleep ritual. What might your sleep rituals be before you go to bed, to cultivate getting more into that low tone? Parasympathetic might be something to work with. Jen, anything to add? Anyone have a cough drop?

(00:58:37):

JEN: No, I think you covered it, Rebecca. Yeah, and just the only thing I'll add, which isn't really, just an aside, because it's related, is that it is very common for our dreams to change as we do this work. So a lot does happen in our dreams, but often it will start to show up during the day as well. So as you, Rebecca, said, you don't necessarily have to wake yourself, if you wake up. That's one thing, but you don't have to set an alarm to wake yourself up unless you really want to. Then of course go for it.

(00:59:13):

So it might just, we still have a number of questions, so it might be a good time to just sort of take a little stretch. If you want to walk around, drink some water or whatever, notice if you have an impulse to move. Yeah, cover your camera, whatever floats your boat right now. I will continue just because I enjoy breaks, but we have a fair amount to go through. So I'm going to see if we can see how many we can get through today, because we have some, they're always solid questions, as they are today. So the next one, I'm going to go to the next question, and I want to share, to the person I'm about to answer. Then I'm going to give you a very brief answer, but then everything I say to the next question or much of what I say in response to the next question could apply to you too.

(01:00:11):

So just listen to the next answer as well. So this person says, "I'm a 30-year-old woman, and I have felt very ashamed, angry, and masculine my entire life. My dad was abusive, and I think I became like him to defend myself. My question is how do you work with other people's energy? This work helps so much, but are there specific things that I can do?" So first I want to say if it's been your entire life, that's by definition early developmental trauma, and what you're doing is working. You said this work helps so much. So first I just want to say keep doing whatever you're doing because as you've probably heard us say, it takes time to create a whole new foundation for how we exist.

(01:01:03):

The next part I just really want to highlight, because you say how do you work with other people's energy? It's very important to know that you don't, if you think about how hard it is to work with yourself, and then you think about trying to work with someone else's energy, it's not really possible. That said, of course, people impact us. That's a huge part of being human, is that we impact one another. And so we can absolutely work with the impact that someone

has on us, or the way we feel, or the way we react when we're in the presence of someone else and their energy and their behavior and all the things that are them. So to do that, we really keep practicing the basics. All of this is growing the capacity, growing the regulation, but then we work with it the way we work with anything else.

(01:02:01):

And we've already had a few examples of that, as I'll share a little bit more in response to this next question. And the only thing I'll add is that we might also choose to make practical decisions. So we might choose to make, I don't know what, you may not have a relationship with your dad now, I don't know if he's still with us, but sometimes it can help to take space from someone if we know they have a big impact on us. And that can be really, really, really hard sometimes. And it can also be hugely helpful for some of us. And as we move towards working with the healthy aggression that we worked with earlier, and I will clarify, it's lab six and seven. I did look it up. So healthy aggression will be in lab six and seven, but as we work with that, it really helps us to differentiate ourselves to work with those, a lot of health.

(01:02:58):

I guess that's the other thing I don't want to miss, is there's a lot of health to the anger that we often don't know how to metabolize, and then use to drive or move our lives forward and create. So just know that that will be helpful as well. It'll also help with setting boundaries. So the short answer is we don't work with other people's energy, but we do work with how they impact us and the response we have in their presence. So the next question is, this person is also an alumni. And if you don't already know, and maybe one of you, if you don't mind, I forgot to pop this one in there too, but there's an early trauma tips resource in the extra resources section on the SBSM site. And this person is saying that they're working with that they're applying it, so that's great to hear.

(01:03:52):

And then their question is, "how do you heal from the impacts of physical harm or assault?" In their case, their dad was the person who assaulted them, and it really went from, it may have started even as a baby, but definitely as a 1-year-old up to early adult, it stopped when they were 19 and they left home. So however, despite the beating, "there's also immense love between us. And this person who was abusive also took care of me with housing and food and in other ways. And so what I notice now is that I have freeze and dissociation, which are

related. I have terror, I have anxiety, I have depression. They're all challenges for me. I've also experienced toxic shame. There were things that I didn't experience, adversity." So let me kind of try and summarize. I said a lot there, but the essence is how do you heal from the effects of physical harm or assault that go all the way back?

(01:05:00):

And this is at the hands of a parent where there's also love. And so first I want to acknowledge, acknowledge that it was a huge step to leave. And so that showed that you had access to agency and you made an important decision for yourself. And so I just want to acknowledge you for taking that step. Then I also want to acknowledge that being human can be complex. We can hold many different experiences. We can hold great love for someone who hurts us, and that can be confusing. It can be sometimes confusing to have these real mixes of feelings, and sometimes it can be disorienting to sort of like, yeah, there's this whole mix of things I feel in relationship to this very important person in my life. And so the one thing that we definitely want to do, because these things, especially when they go back potentially to being a baby, or even before they run really deep.

(01:06:02):

And so we really want to keep practicing the basics. Just all the things that, all the basic practices, labs one and two, and then the things you discover that work for you, resources, other practices to really create the conditions to keep growing that capacity, and the regulation, because there will be different layers, you named layers, and we want to, in time, we want to be able to tease those layers apart. So just to name a few, you mentioned freeze and dissociation, which tend to be related. They're along the spectrum of conservation, physiology. You mentioned terror, you mentioned anxiety, you mentioned depression. Very often there's sadness, there's grief, you mentioned shame. And so what we want to do in time is we want to tease them apart, because what tends to happen sometimes is we just feel them as this big, there's just this big ball of stuff, this big ball of feeling that's too much, which can contribute to the dissociation.

(01:07:07):

That's a protective response. And so as we grow capacity and regulation, we learn to titrate. We can start to sort of say, okay, can I feel the love different to the terror? Can I feel the shame different to the grief? And so we just want to, it can take time. And it definitely, as I mentioned,

the growing capacity and regulation are a big part of this, but we want to learn to tease things apart right then. And this kind of relates all of this, and this in particular relates back to the last question as well. When we grow up, and I also had an angry dad who was frightening. When we're little people, we don't really have, most of us don't really have the opportunity to fight back, but a big tenant of this work is that the impulse to fight back and protect ourselves is still held inside of us.

(01:08:15):

So as capacity and regulation grow, and as you keep teasing things apart and listening to more detail, then you'll likely start to notice like, oh, what we were talking about earlier, I want to punch, or I want to push, or I want to growl. Because you mentioned this started when you were really young. You might have responses show up in different ways, right? Because if you think about how a real little one would run away, or a baby, they sort of wriggle more than they run before they can walk and run. And so just to know that it won't necessarily always look like a punch or a run, it might look like a wriggle or it might look like lots of movements of the mouth. It might look like a bite. So just to know that these incomplete responses, these procedural memories will likely surface as you keep doing the work. That's very common.

(01:09:18):

There's one, two other things I wanted to mention. Let me think here. One is that, and you may already be doing this, but if we grow up with people who didn't feel safe, a lot of us who grew up in that environment, including myself, we can find relationships in general to be challenging sometimes. And other people might read as being scary even if they're very kind. And so as you have the interest and the capacity for it, finding ways to be in a relationship, and that could be joining a club or a group. Irene talks about starting by going to a park or a store. It could be for me, a lot of my professional trainings have been a way to explore relationships. So just to know that sometimes finding ways where we're in these settings where we're encouraged to be more authentic, this is one right here that can be helpful too.

(01:10:22):

So there's a lot here. But what I want to, if I were to summarize, I'd say keep growing access to the different experiences within yourself to capacity and regulation. And then just know what's a process and to work with these different layers over time. And as Rebecca, as you shared with your dad, I also, I was terrified of my dad until I was in my forties and I'm absolutely not

anymore as I did this work over time. So things really can and do change. So yeah, on that note, I will turn it back to you, Rebecca.

(01:11:06):

REBECCA: Right. Okay. Here we are. "Hi there. I'm an alum with early developmental trauma. Lately I get random heart rate sparks without an apparent reason, or at least I'm not aware of one. It happens at home, at work, as if I'm startled. There's no impulse that I could sense, of what my body would want to do. I feel stuck. What could I do to process this activation in real time?" So it sounds like, since you're saying you're an alum, you've been doing the work, and you said that this is lately happening. So it sounds like this is more of a newer thing, a newer expression symptom. And it means there's some sympathetic moving with the shift in the heart rate like that, which is a good sign. So to work with it in a lot of ways, you just sometimes have to let these things happen. But to really support yourself in doing that, which might be that you're tuning into it happening, and also your resources, your sense of orienting to the space, to a part of the body that isn't your heart, that feels maybe more neutral.

(01:12:35):

And you could use SIBAM, as I had mentioned earlier, to help with, because you had mentioned that you're listening, but there is no impulse of what maybe it wants to do. And sometimes this just takes time. The SIBAM might help bring that forth a little bit more, as well as maybe just doing some movement. Can you go with it a little bit and do some movement, like take a walk, Elia's movement lessons, and that's the dance of this work. It's like, do I want to go with the activation? Do I want to just soothe and try to settle? And so we're just tuning into and experimenting with which to do, which also could depend, right? If you're at work, maybe that isn't the time that you're going to go in to the activation and track it, but just doing things to support and soothe yourself, gauge the ventral vagal system, social engagement, that's the idea of orienting, and bringing in those cues of safety, big time.

(01:13:44):

The mediastinum lesson could be useful. And lab six, lab six is, I mean, all the labs are wonderful, but lab six I think is really, really helpful at all of them. And regarding the containment, the layers and the mediastinum, even if you just do, don't do the whole mediastinum at once, but just follow your impulse with how that you can do for a little bit, or a longer period depending on your capacity.

Okay, so next one. “Hi. I was diagnosed with CIDP as a child. Hopefully you know what that is. I got IVIG treatments and didn't go anymore and symptoms went away as a child. But I wonder if I still suffer from it in ways that aren't recognized by doctors. For example, when doing somatic practices, I get a lot of fear. The disease affects the myelin sheath of nerves and I'm wondering how I can effectively work with CIDP.” So CIDP, just to let you guys know, is a chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy. So it affects the myelination of the nerves, falls under the category of an autoimmune disorder, and then the IVIG is a treatment where they're giving antibodies, and that alters the immune response. And somehow, and it sounds like this was effective and was helpful to this member, because you're mentioning that you're, you don't experience the symptoms, but when doing the somatic practices, noticing a lot of fear.

(01:15:34):

So this can be a form of early developmental trauma to experience a condition like that. It could even be what brought the condition on. So working with early development trauma and all the ways that you've been learning in SBSM, and that's gently building capacity, pacing yourself and learning to not fear the fear, that's essentially a big way to sum up what we're doing in this work. So to detangle it, so there's the fear and then there's the sensation. So you mentioned, “I'm doing a somatic practice and I get a lot of fear.” So in the somatic practice, what might be something you experience? What is the sensation and what is that like compared to fear? So for example, if you felt a tingling or a buzzing, that sensation, and yet what is the fear if you can start to tease them apart to be able to work with them in that way?

(01:16:40):

And this will help so that you're not just responding to sensation or movement in a way that brings up the fear. But as Jen mentioned earlier, when our system has just been wired and gotten used to being at either end of the polls, as she said, this is just kind of what happens until we build more capacity and regulation. And in this specific case, because of the nature of that condition and some of that stored, the stored memory, and the stored trauma of that condition from when you were a child, doing something that's asking you to listen to your system, and that is bringing up more sensation. It's understandable that there's this association to this being a scary thing. So making new associations to sensation, that's where what feels good, what kind of movement feels good, what kind of touch or temperature resources feel good? And can you notice that compared to the fear and pendulate to that as you're working in the somatic practices, and I'm just checking my notes again here, the Feldenkrais lessons will

be helpful later. Lab six, and you may consider working with the practitioner, if it could be a somatic experiencing practitioner, a Feldenkrais practitioner, if you want some more one-on-one specific support, a somatic practice practitioner, a really great cranial sacral, and just seeing how that might land for you, just to get some more support and some more feedback with somebody.

(01:18:32):

Okay. All right, Jen.

(01:18:36):

JEN: Okay, thanks Rebecca. Excuse me. So I'm going to go down to this question, which is this person's fourth round, he has heavy layers of disgust, fear, and shutdown after "realizing that I am transgender, a man stuck in a woman's body, how do I work with the mobilization of the flight response and the strong fear held in the belly when it wants me to run away from my own body, the organic estrogenic process and the trauma, that was the first puberty that shouldn't have happened." So I want to start by saying that this is a form. If this life, likely is lifelong, it sounds like you're becoming aware of it now, but I would wonder if on some level you weren't aware of it your whole life and sort of feeling uncomfortable in your own skin and body. And if that does resonate, then just kind of recognizing that that also would fit into the experience of early developmental trauma.

(01:19:52):

And so, foundation can be especially important, right? You named in here, you named flight, strong fear, away. I would imagine that there's also grief, right? You mentioned disgust. So there's anger that may surface at some point, right? So as we were talking about earlier, it can be so important to keep building that foundation so that we can hold all of these big feelings and experiences that we hold that we have inside. So I'll just say foundation, foundation, foundation. And then we got to reiterating what we talked about earlier, but teasing apart in time, we want to tease apart the different elements of the experience so that we can experience the disgust separate from the shame, separate from the flight. So I hear as we make space for each element, we want to kind of notice in detail how it shows up. So that impulse to flee, how does it actually show up?

(01:21:00):

So I hear you, I hear that you're saying, how do I flee from my own body? And so this is where first we want to recognize that it sounds like your experience is a little different. And generally speaking, when early developmental trauma is in the picture, we tend to internalize the things we experience outside of us. It's very common to be disgusted with ourselves, to direct shame towards ourselves, to direct anger towards ourselves. All those things are very common in your scenario. And if for anyone else this resonates with, we need to find ways to consciously direct it out. The other way to externalize it, when it feels, when it feels like I want to run from my own body, then it can be important to look at, okay, can I get creative with that? So for example, first of all, what does it actually feel like inside?

(01:22:12):

What's the impulse to run from your own body feel like? And then just sort of like, well, what if I were to externalize that? What might that look like? And so in your case, this could be very different for you. I'm just giving you some examples. But depending on your relationship with God, might be angry with God, might be angry with ancestors, or the genomes who passed down some of the genetic information that led to you being in the body that is not right for you. So to really think about, okay, how can I direct this externally?

(01:22:58):

You talk about the estrogenic process. You might even imagine you don't want to do this towards yourself. That can be the tricky thing is, we really want to externalize it. But you might imagine these little estrogenic gremlins and who sort of led your body to develop in this way. That is not what feels like you. So how can you externalize it? Can you run from those little gremlins? Can you direct your anger towards those gremlins? So it can take some creativity and experimentation to find, how can I take what feels like I want to direct it at myself and find ways to externalize it.

(01:23:49):

I'm just looking at my notes for a sec. We may need to get, oh, the sensation of wanting to leave one's own skin is not uncommon. I just want to name that. That comes up a lot. A lot of us have this experience of wanting to leave our own skin, and that's where we really need to start to notice in detail the feeling of that, and find ways to work with that in a titrated way, a little bit at a time. The other thing I want to offer is that an aspect of this work can involve renegotiating past experiences. So when you went through that experience of puberty, it

sounds like it might've been painful, or in hindsight it feels very painful. So what would it be like to imagine that you went through it differently with different awareness and with different supports, and you had different choices that you could make just to give yourself the experience of what it would've been like to be able to do it really differently in a way that felt more like you, and you with support for what you're going through. And then the other thing is it can be important too, you may already be doing this, but to find supports in your life, to find supports, to find people who relate to what you're going through. This is the case for all of us. Relate to what you're going through, who get it, who can walk beside you. So hopefully that gives you some ideas. Anything I missed there, Rebecca?

(01:25:39):

REBECCA: No, that's great. I like the creativity part. It's great.

(01:25:45):

JEN: Yeah, it can be hard when it feels like, for so many of us, it can feel so convincing that it's me or it's something in me. And there may feel, I mean there are of course the things that I didn't mention that, but there are practical choices to be made at some point around what feels right for you, because sometimes it is right for people to physically change their body so that they do have the body that is more suited to who they are as a person.

So yeah, so we're right at time, so if you need to go, go. But we only have two more questions. So I think it makes sense, probably, to go ahead and just finish the two, if that's all right. But of course if you need to sign off, please by all means do. And thank you for staying this long. So Rebecca, I will turn it over to you, so you have one more, and then I have one more.

(01:26:41):

REBECCA: All right. "Hi. Is it possible to be stuck in the initial shock state? I've always had a feeling of that deer in the headlight state where I feel terror and a big surge of energy and my whole body, but I'm unable to move. I've never really been good at being functionally frozen because I always feel too much at the same time as I'm frozen. Do I need to work with this in a special way? Many thanks." In general, working with this is everything in the program, cultivating capacity, doing the basics, and this is the beginning of the freeze state, right? It's like that initial shock is what I'm hearing, the deer and the headlights.

(01:27:30):

So to support that by supporting your system with the basics, that's going to help to move out of that state. But then there's going to be the sympathetic to work with. And so you can engage the sympathetic system by just seeing about where, first and foremost, just noticing, okay, so you're in that state, but where is there some movement? Right? There might be some movement. You're breathing, you're swallowing, maybe you're moving your body a little bit, or maybe you more consciously see if you can just move your finger a little bit, and notice that difference between that shock and stuck state, and pendulate towards that. It might even be that you notice something in the environment moving, the wind moving the tree, or bird sounds, music, the motion, something different than the stuck state, the posture of the stuck state. So if you can notice that posture, I'm just using that as the example, of the eyes wide, kind of staring, and go into it.

(01:28:54):

And then can you do a little bit less of it? So as I'm kind of making myself more rigid, more erect, what might be just a little bit of a difference, and notice what happens inside, and then you go back to it. So you're just oscillating a little bit, while again, the capacity is building, and really bringing in the cues of safety. If you just consider being shocked, being in freeze, there needs to be this recognition of, you are okay, you can move out of that. But again, even if we just consider an animal in freeze, even if they were down, in full shutdown, and started to come out of it, they're going to jump up and run and get back to their herd and their safety. They're not just going to hang out there and sunbathe. So there's that thing we have to do in moving out of that. One more thing on my note. Oh, the lab one, extra resources at the bottom may be useful, of just some different more nuanced types of orienting, and rolling the head a little bit, the rolling the head lesson in the orienting, as well as Elia's movement lessons. Alright, back to you Jen, if there's anything you want to add to that.

(01:30:27):

JEN: No, the only thing I want to say is I want to give a shout out for Elia's movement lessons, because sometimes they're totally in my consciousness, and I mention them all the time, and then sometimes I forget to mention them. And Elia's wonderful, and his lessons are wonderful. So if you haven't checked them out, I really encourage you to do so. And if you're new, you'll have access to more of them over time. So we have one more question. So thanks for hanging

in there, for those of you who are still here. So the last question is that “I’m in my fourth or fifth round now, but I still feel like I have sadness or grief stuck in my upper body. I wonder why it does not seem to come out. I did the gut/brain practice and now start the Voo-Ahh.” If you're new, those are practices in later labs., “But I still feel it's stuck there.”

(01:31:17):

“What could be the reason it does not find resolution? I feel angry and desperate about it, as it restricts me in my daily interactions, and I wake up at 5:00 AM every night.” So I just want to say first that I’m not exactly sure what you mean by stuck. And so I’ll offer a few possibilities. So sometimes I used to feel like I literally had a block, like a metal block or something in my chest that just would not go away or would not move. And so sometimes we can feel like we have something physical stuck inside of us, and it may not, or it may have an association such as grief or sadness. So that's one possibility. Another possibility is it might just feel like you just have lots of grief and lots of sadness, and you feel it mostly in your chest. And so depending on how your stuckness is showing up, most of this will apply to both, but there might be nuances in how you work differently.

(01:32:35):

So I wanted to name that, when we have early developmental trauma, which you didn't mention, but let's say it might be the case, sometimes we can have this existential grief and sadness that is just from, it can be from not getting our needs met early in life. It can be from living in disconnection from ourselves for decades. It can be from many things, but there's just, and early on actually an important one is that sometimes if we have a rough entry into the world, or we don't feel welcomed, we can feel like we're alone, and we can feel like we're all alone in the world. It can be a very lonely place to be. And so sometimes we just have layers and layers of grief and sadness that need to move through over time.

(01:33:40):

If that's part of it, then one of the things we want to think about is, well, how would we be with a child? Or how would we be with someone we cared about if they were just really sad, we would likely, if they were open to it, we might hold them. We might offer them a stuffy or go outside with them or color with them. But there would be this checking in with what feels supportive and there would be this element of softness and warmth and care. And so those are some of the things that we want to learn to offer ourselves sometimes. I think Ari linked to

it earlier. Thank you. The four ways to spark up the social engagement nervous system, that can be ways to be held by plants and trees and animals. And those of you who have been around know, I say this all the time, but for me, soft things, I have it in my lap right now. Soft things are really important, and warm things, so it can be important to feel held right. We're not just sort of crying and crying. We also want to feel somewhat held and connected to ourselves in the present, so that we're not just kind of repeating a loop.

(01:35:06):

I get a little curious when you say that you feel angry and desperate about it because the experience within you, who feels really sad, some people talk in terms of parts. What is their experience like? Do you feel held and cared for in your sadness, or is it more like, come on, get over this enough already. I want to get on with my life. Stop crying already. So just to notice how you meet yourself in those experiences. And sometimes we need to find people outside of us, or to listen to books or music or shows to help us to see different ways to be with these experiences. Or sometimes if it's an option to go to a class where you feel really held or something like that, the anger and desperation that might need its own expression and its own attention, anger, healthy aggression. So to be curious about how is that anger showing up when I think about it, do I just want to squeeze my fist and shake my head and make a sound, or is it something different? But we talked about this earlier in the call, but to be curious about how those feelings of anger and desperation are showing up and to work with those.

(01:36:31):

But it can take time if this is that. It may not resonate. I don't know enough about your situation from your question, but if it is that existential kind of a sadness, or that very old, very early sadness, it's like Rebecca said, we might need to let movements move through us, and they might just need to come through us over time. We may just need to let ourselves be really sad over time, and to keep tuning into that I'm sad and I'm here and I feel my hand, excuse me, and I'm going to make myself a cup of tea, and I'm going to go sit in the grass. And maybe for a long time I had a favorite, a stuffed pig that I would hold all the time. I'm going to pee, to get my hot water bottle, or heat up something in the microwave. So to see what happens.

(01:37:23):

And sometimes it's hard to receive tenderness and care. And if that's the case, then to explore what happens as you start to move in the direction of something that might feel like

tenderness or care or even softness. So hopefully that gives you some ideas. Oh, the only thing, I'll also, one last thing is that if it is more of that physical block, you feel a physical block, then working with adjacent areas can sometimes be helpful. So instead of just always focusing on the chest, what's it like to do the diaphragms, like the pelvic, and the feet, work with those diaphragms? What's it like to do some gentle head rolling, right? The mediastinum practice, I think was already linked to earlier, but that can be a really helpful one if you're new, you don't have access yet, but Irene does have a free or a freely available heart meditation.

(01:38:31):

Yeah. And then you can also then work, if it is something that feels like a physical work, in a very, very titrated way, what's it like if a butterfly landed, if I have a block here, what's it like? What would it feel like if a butterfly landed on the very edge? Can I just sense into a very little bit? Because as we talked about very early in the call, often if something isn't changing over time, we're not noticing a difference, then that can be a clue that we need to titrate more. So that's something else that might want attention or need to happen. So, anything you want to add there, Rebecca?

(01:39:13):

REBECCA: No, I think that's good. Thanks everybody.

(01:39:20):

JEN: Yeah, thank you all for hanging out with us. Sorry we went a little over today. We're still sort of getting into our co-hosting groove. So thanks, Ari and Leah, for being here and doing what you do. And yeah, I wish you all a nourishing week and look forward to maybe seeing you the next time. Sounds good? All right. Take care, everybody. Bye, everyone.