

Curated Q&A Call #7 - Special topic: Early Developmental Trauma with Seth and Jen - May 1, 2025

Seth (00:00:02):

Okay, so this is a Q and A call for SBSM 17, and this is another early developmental trauma call with my lovely co-host, Jen. Hey Jen, welcome. Good to see you. Can you unmute yourself? Okay.

Jen (00:00:19):

Yes I can. Hello Seth, and hello everyone.

Seth (00:00:23):

Alright, so we've also got Susan here helping out in the chat. Thanks so much, Susan. Alright, so we will get going. Now there are a few questions that were submitted that didn't mention early developmental trauma, but what they named is a dynamic that is very often common with early developmental trauma. So this first question is one of those. So, "I don't ask for a lot of help from my sister, when I do. I sense that her yes is really a no, she's never told me no, I don't trust her or want to ask her for help anymore. It feels yucky when, for example, I ask her to put a hand on my back, but she isn't actually available. She's just doing it anyway. How can I work with this? It drives me insane and creates so much anger and tension in the relationship. I don't even want to see her and I'm pissed. I want her help, but I don't trust her." So this kind of relationship between siblings is not at all uncommon, when both grew up marinating in the same kind of dysregulated stew. I have a lot of personal experience with this kind of dynamic with my own sister, which I'll get into later on. A related question.

(00:01:46):

So here's the thing, even if she wants to help, which she may genuinely want to help, she may not know that what you're perceiving is, it's actually no, I'm not available. She may not feel that way. It's possible she feels totally available but isn't actually and doesn't know that. A lot of this comes down to is everyone doing their work, right? So it sounds like you're doing your work here in this program asking these questions. So awesome. Is she doing any kind of work to work on her trauma? Does she even know that she's traumatized? A lot of that informs sort of how to navigate this kind of miscommunication or misperception is really common. So like I

said, she may feel available, but not understand that or not connected, or she may not be aware of her own boundaries or even know that she can't really be present.

(00:02:42):

Or maybe there's something just that's in confusion in the field between the two of you because of how you grew up. Maybe there's power dynamics that haven't been resolved. There can be all sorts of things at play here. So if she is someone who is doing her own work, then it may be very useful in this context for the two of you to work together with someone who specializes in family systems and working with families, especially if they're trauma-informed somatically. Hopefully that's the case. I was fortunate enough to do that with my sibling and that was really helpful. If she's not doing any of her own trauma work, then this sounds like a situation where boundaries would be appropriate. In either case, I think it's probably a good idea for you to not continue to ask for help from her, because clearly there's some wires crossed and it's not helpful for you.

(00:03:42):

I hear the desire for connection and for her to help, but our siblings can't be our practitioners, our siblings, our partners can't be our therapists. Neither can our siblings, neither can our parents. There's a reason that we pay somebody for private work, it's because they're not part of the stew we grew up in. So it might be very difficult to work this out directly with her unless you have some facilitation that she's willing to participate with. I hope that all makes sense. If that's not the case, then this is a time for boundaries and it's like, okay, you know what? We can still be in communication, but I'm going to keep more to myself. I'm going to do my own work for myself while I move through this stuff. Now what that work may be, my question is this desire you have for connection, for support from your sister.

(00:04:34):

How can you show up for yourself that way? That's what a lot of these practices in SBSM are about is how can I show up for myself? These neurosensory exercises are all guided explorations in being with yourself, providing yourself attuned, compassionate support in a variety of ways. So something specifically that I think of, well, it sounds like there's some aggression and anger here, so you may need to explore healthy aggression work. It may be that you need to explore some of the annihilation work with your family. I mean like I've talked about before and in that article, I've destroyed my family many times and it was really helpful.

It was only in my imagination and it helped give a vehicle for these charges that aren't logical. Most of us have complex feelings around our family when we grew up with trauma, but we don't actually want to destroy them.

(00:05:34):

But there is an impulse in us that does this sort of animalistic aggressive urge, that felt kind of like a trapped beast growing up, that just wanted to lash out and destroy. That's really, really common. If that's in the picture, it sounds like it might be so healthy. Aggression work, annihilation work, possibly starting to explore some of those. On the flip side of things, how can you show up for yourself and offer yourself compassionate, attuned support? So just self touch can be really helpful. How can you give yourself that quality you're looking for of, like, I'm here, I'm listening. The layers work. That lesson is a really helpful one a lot of the time, for that guiding you through working with the different layers of the body in this attuned way. So I would suggest that as well, just spontaneous organic self touch, the containment lessons as well are all about that. So I would say explore those in addition to working with the aggressive energy that's underneath. Alright, that's about all I have for that one. Jen, do you want to add anything or move on to the next one?

Jen (00:06:43):

Just something I think you already said, Seth, but to make it a little more explicit is that when we're in relationships with someone, especially with someone close to us, oftentimes sometimes most of the relationship happens inside of ourselves. And so just to know that in all the ways that you just said, Seth, you can really work with the relationship with the person also on your own, both if they're not willing, but also sometimes it can be helpful to say things like imagine saying things that we wouldn't say in reality because it wouldn't serve what we're looking for in the relationship. So just to know that that can be really powerful alongside.

Seth (00:07:24):

Totally.

Jen (00:07:25):

Yeah. Okay. So I just want to let you guys know that I've changed time zones and climates, and it's been a day, and so I'm noticing that my voice is a little froggy, so just bear with me. I think I might have some allergies going on. So, next question. "I have EDT, early developmental trauma and I've worked with a practitioner for three years now. I'm in my second round of SBSM. When I'm doing the basics, my head often turns quickly to the side, usually with my eyes closed and sometimes a grimace, sometimes my back arches too. It feels like I'm trying to look away from something possibly linked to my mother's anger growing up. This has been happening for a long time. How can I work with this?" So as you, one thing that we can always do when we're not sure what's happening is that we can always do less, because there's a principle in Feldenkrais that says basically the less we do, the more we notice.

(00:08:37):

And so, ways that you might do less in this case is that you can break an experience into parts, work with just a piece at a time. It can often be powerful once we can tune in, or to practice if you're not already able to do this, to practice tuning the impulse or the initiation and just work with the start of that movement. For example, is it in the solar plexus? Does it feel more like it's higher up? So just sort of noticing can I find the start of the movement and work with that. Sometimes too, it can be really helpful to work with a response that we're wanting to explore when it's not happening. So it sounds like you have a clear sense of the movement that happens. There's sometimes an arch and a head turn and the eyes close. Sometimes the face gets involved.

(00:09:29):

So at a time when that's not happening, you might start to work with that movement, because then you can really slow it down and you can really notice in a way that is sometimes harder to do when a wave just comes through us. Just looking at my notes here, both Seth and I sort of had a sense, and you never know, this is something for you to discover, but what you're describing sounded very early, because often when we have a very early response in utero or an infant, the responses tend to be more centered around the spine and the head and the neck. And so you might sort of see, you're noticing what the face wants to do, do the hands and arms want to do anything? So just sort of also maybe seeing what happens if you call to mind or imagine, okay, I'm very young, maybe I'm just really sensing.

(00:10:21):

And it might help to also do that by laying on the ground because little ones are, if you're in utero, we can back up against the inner edge of the womb or push against it. And also babies, their exploration of the ground and ground forces is really important. So exploring in different positions such as laying on the ground could be something to explore. The one thing that I was curious about is that you say, possibly linked to my mother's anger growing up. And so what can be important here is that sometimes when we're noticing something happening and we're not sure why, we might go looking for a reason for why it might be happening. And that can be different to when something just arises inside of us. Oh, all of a sudden, Seth, I've heard you talk about your dad yelling over your shoulder when you were doing homework, right?

(00:11:16):

We might just have a flash of memory or something that arises from the inside, but it can be helpful and important to differentiate between when we're looking to place meaning or a memory on top of something and when it's coming up from the inside. So that might be something to be aware of too. If you do have a sense, a clear sense of something, you can always work with that, you can imagine that, what would you have wanted to do or what might've wanted to happen. And then the other thing that comes to mind is that, you're talking primarily here, it sounds like what you describe is the movement. So I would be curious about are there other elements, you might've heard us talk about SIBAM, the different elements of experience that Peter Levine teaches. So is there a sensation that happens when you have this experience you're already looking for? Meaning is an image, is there an image that comes, and sensation, I told you I'm a little slow coming back here. Sensation, image, meaning, affect, emotion. So is there an emotion? Right? And then the behavior, I skipped B, behavior. The behavior is the movement.

(00:12:35):

The bottom line there is what else are you noticing? Are you noticing an image? Are you noticing sensations? Are you noticing other elements? So as far as practices go, of course follow your impulses, but things that come to mind are the different Feldenkrais practices, like potent posture, rolling like a baby, the longer orientation with the head and the neck, so you can really slow down and listen to what wants to happen in that head and the neck area. Gentle head rolling is going to be released tomorrow. You're an alum, but for those of you who are new, watering the brainstem will be in the resources as of tomorrow, and then layers, because a lot of times if it is a very early experience, a lot of times we can hold a lot in the

fascia. And so you might discover things in the other layers too, but the fascia can in particular be something to be curious about. So I think that's all I got. Would you like, oh yeah, that's all I'll say. Would you like to add anything, Seth?

Seth (00:13:42):

The only thing I thought of while you were talking was to also, because this does sound early to me as well, this sounds like baby stuff, that to remember that when we are moving through these motions and what's essentially called renegotiation, when we're working with a pattern that's in the body because of survival, stress, and we're looking for, like Jen said, well, what didn't get to happen? Well, what didn't get to happen may have been you didn't get to get up and run away. You were a baby and you had no arms and legs that could actually do that yet. But sometimes when we're working with this stuff as an adult, it can be helpful to remember we do have arms and legs now. And so this is a way in which sometimes imagination can help bridge between a stuck early impulse and our adult creative self.

(00:14:39):

So just to be aware of that, you have arms and legs now. So maybe you start on the floor and you're engaging these movements and like Jen said, you're listening for the other elements of your experience. Maybe there's an impulse, maybe you realize the impulse is to get up and run away. Well, you can do that now. You could explore what it feels like to come up to your legs and to feel the legs underneath you and to start to move. So just to know that your imagination, your adult self, all that you have access to now is still available when working with very early things where those elements were not available, which can be, it sounds obvious, but sometimes when we're really in an early experience, we can forget that we have limbs like, oh yeah, wait, I have these things. So yeah, just something to remember.

(00:15:32):

Okay, "Me and my parents all have early developmental trauma. My mother is almost alexithymic due to it." I had to look that one up. The names they come up with for different things that are just trauma responses. So what alexithymic means is emotional blindness, difficulty understanding or expressing emotion. This is what happens when we go into freeze early on. It's just a normal part of a survival adaptation. "When reading the text about coupling dynamics by Seth, I realize that I'm over coupling meaning and most often sensations, being a lot of time in the brain mode, but under coupling emotions with most often behavior, like I feel

a little emotion, but when they arise it makes me feel overwhelmed, floating, disorganized. Can you give some advice that would help me to have my energy more in balance between mind and emotions?" So if you haven't read the article uncoupling dynamics yet, that is on my website.

(00:16:32):

I believe it's referenced on the site as well. So you can always check that out. It's a fascinating thing. Essentially what we're talking about is certain elements can get too tightly bound together or can not be associated together at all. And that is under coupled or over coupled. So in this case, I think that the solution to finding the balance is to really tune into the physicality of the emotions' motions. So, under coupling. It said over coupling meaning and sensations, very often sensations, so like a sensation arises and you go very much into thinking what does this mean? What's the meaning of the sensation? Where did it come from? What is this about? What emotions are sensations? This is something that a lot of us may not even realize for a while. Emotions are sensations. They are clusters of sensation that we've given specific meaning to.

(00:17:33):

So if I feel tight in my chest and my throat and my breathing is shallow and fast, that cluster of sensations tells me that I'm afraid, maybe my pelvic floor is tight as well. If I'm really terrified. These clusters of sensations produce emotion. So rather than looking for the meaning in the sensation, how might you just be present to it and start to feel into what the feeling of the sensation is, and saying, when an emotion arises, I understand that, it's essentially what you're saying is, it feels overwhelming. That's what's going on, is an emotion comes and you get overwhelmed. Well, one thing that might be helpful is to really notice the physicality of the emotion. Because what can overwhelm us with emotion is the association, the memories, the images, the thoughts that come. Can you really notice the body? What is the actual sensation that's happening when the emotion arises?

(00:18:32):

And conversely, when the sensation arises, how does that relate to an emotion? What might that sensation feel like? So this means really getting into direct experience. How does the sensation want to be expressed? What is the color maybe of the sensation rather than thinking about the meaning? If you go into the body and you're feeling a sensation, what's the texture

of it? How would you describe it? Is it a sharp jangly sensation? Is it red and fiery? How might you interpret it as an image directly or as a texture? Then what is the sound? If you were to vibrate that area of your body where the sensation is, how would you do that with sound? Can you even tell where that sensation is precisely? So that's another thing. Say emotions are coming. Okay, well where is this emotion? What exactly is it? Oh, it's a tightness in my solar plexus.

(00:19:31):

Okay, I can feel that. How big is that territory? Where do I no longer feel that tightness? Like, oh, I can feel up into, over to my ribs, and I don't feel that sense of tightness anymore. It's just here. And you start to get sort of a mental map of the internal territory where that sensation is. These are all different ways in which you may start working more directly and physically with the experiences that you're describing, which can act as that bridge, because when you do this, you're bringing in your creative mind, and creativity and survival energy cannot coexist. They are different parts of the brain. So they can both be together at the same time for a while as you're sort of in this tug of war between following the survival versus following your creativity and your intervention. But ultimately one is going to win out. So if you really focus on how can I be creative with this experience? How can I interpret it physically, how can I visualize it, make an expression of it, make a sound with it, that creative part of your brain will help lift you out of the survival mode and give you different options for how to express it.

(00:20:42):

Over to you, Jen.

Jen (00:20:44):

Okay. One that I'll just say before I go on is, I'm wondering, Seth, if finding the painful and the pleasant might be to explore, just to penate, because part of working with company dynamics can be really experiencing the different parts of what's over or under coupled as two distinct things.

Seth (00:21:06):

Absolutely. Yep. Finding the painful and the pleasant and maybe also tense and relaxed also serves to work with pendulation. Yeah.

Jen (00:21:14):

Alright, next question. "I have early trauma, among other things. I'm experiencing a quite intense period with what appears to be procedural memories bubbling up, especially at night. Can new but old physical pain also be procedural memory? I'm experiencing some of this now and I'm confused. Why does this happen? What do I do about it? Can the pain get re-stuck if I don't process it in the right way? Thanks in advance." Okay. Excuse me. So first it's very common for things to bubble up, period. As people explore this work and we grow capacity and have more access to regulation, things bubble up. That's what happens. And this can particularly be the case at night. Sometimes people can have associations from their past at night, but more often it's just that our defenses are a bit lower. We go into that, what is it? I can't think of the word, but some, there's a state where we're kind of between sleeping and waking, and then when we're sleeping, our defenses are down.

(00:22:26):

And so it's quite common that things will come up at night as we're sleeping, going to sleep, waking up. So just know that that actually can be a positive sign that that capacity is growing. You asked about the pain, can new but old physical pain also be procedural memory? So it's important to know that we can have pain that could be associated with the procedural memory, but then we can have procedural memories without pain and we can also have pain that has nothing to do with the procedural memory. So just to know that, speaking of coupling a minute ago, they can go together, but they're also two separate and distinct things. When pain happens, Peter Levine talks, and this, Irene has in SBSM, Peter Levine talks about pain as a trapped sensation. So again, we can see pain as an opportunity to say what's happening here.

(00:23:24):

Sometimes pain can mean we're holding something in. And so by bringing our awareness there, maybe bringing self touch, exploring some of the practices like diaphragms or layers, we can make more space for what's held in that pain experience to move and to express as emotion, sensation, sound, movement. So those are all opportunities. Sometimes too, we can simply feel pain because well, we can have something structural going on, but sometimes as things unwind, the example of if we were to hold a fist like this for a year and then start to let it go, it would probably be really uncomfortable as we start to let it go. And a lot of times those of us, especially with early trauma, can have very long held bracing patterns that as they start

to soften and release can be, we can experience pain as part of that process. The good news is that when we're holding something, there's also potential energy held within that.

(00:24:28):

And so as that releases, we tend to have more room to move, we tend to have more access to energy, vitality, lots of good stuff. So you asked if I don't process this the right way, will it get stuck? And no, it's great, right? If it comes up and we follow our impulse and we can orient, but we may not always be able to do that in the moment. Sometimes too, patterns we may need to work with them repeatedly over time. Not everything completes like one and done. So just know that our system has a way of showing us what needs attention. And so if you don't do it in the moment or if you don't do it in a way that you're really following the impulse or within your capacity, then you'll get the message that more attention is needed. So you can kind of take any pressure off there.

(00:25:26):

You can also explore this later by remembering what happened. So that as we talked about earlier, that can be a way to titrate and possibly to notice in more detail and lots of the practices. You didn't ask about practices, but you asked what to do about it. So pretty much all the practices we've already mentioned might be helpful. The layers, the diaphragms, the potentially, because the finding, the painful and the pleasant, the tense and relaxed that Seth just mentioned. So I think that's all I have on this one. Would you like to add anything, Seth?

Seth (00:26:05):

No, that's good. I did see a question in the chat that said can you define procedural memory? This is in a biology of stress videos, so be sure, I can't remember exactly which one. I think it's in number five where she goes into procedural memories, but I don't recall for sure. But briefly, procedural memory is something that we do automatically and there's a wide range of what we call procedural memory. So it could be anything from how we tie our shoes or how we ride a bike. We don't have to think about those things. But procedural memories also include what's called self-protective responses. So simplest example, you're cutting vegetables and you drop the knife before you think about it. Your leg will often move out of the way and the knife hits the floor instead of your foot. That's procedural memory in action. However, say your foot doesn't move out of the way in time and the knife goes in there, well then there's going to be

what's called an incomplete procedural memory because your foot got stuck to the floor before you had a chance to move your leg away.

(00:27:15):

Sorry, kind of a gruesome image, but this is just a simple example. So there'll be these instructions in the body, Hey, move your leg, move your leg. And when that never got completed, then they may develop, say, chronic tightness in the hip because the muscles are trying to fire saying, move, move, move. But we, maybe, are not connected to that. So another classic one is sometimes a frozen shoulder. If the arm didn't get a chance to get up to protect from something that was coming and there's instructions saying, move, move, move, move, or there's some overwhelming emotion associated with the movement. These things can get stuck in the body as what are called incomplete procedural memories or self-protective responses.

(00:27:59):

Okie dokie. So I've got two in a row here. This one doesn't mention EDT specifically, but again it can be related. "Can you speak to how having anorexia in my teens will have affected my nervous system, and if there are specific areas I should focus on to make the work I'm doing to heal more effective? The recovery process took several years, and I still have eating disorder tendencies show up here and there. I started having panic attacks and chronic anxiety as soon as I stopped relying on the ED, the eating disorder, to cope. And I've been dealing with the anxiety ever since, and I'm 25 now. Thanks." So eating disorders are, we tend to view those fundamentally as a way in which a person has control over their body and their experience. And this is a very common adaptation to trauma because usually the nature of trauma means we don't have control, we don't have agency over what's happening to us.

(00:29:01):

We're being overwhelmed. We're oftentimes in family systems where we maybe are overly controlled and we don't have enough agency and access to authenticity, we're not attuned to correctly, we're not responded too well, whether it's rigid, there's many reasons, or it's outright abusive. There's many ways in which we may experience a sense of not having control over what's happening to us so well, this is one thing we can control. This is a way we can have agency, is by controlling, literally, what we eat and how we eat it and what we do with that. So that's generally how we view that, and it's a way of containing survival energy, which is why

when you stopped having the behavior of the eating disorder, which is a way of having control over your experience and your physiology, all that sympathetic energy was let loose because it's not being managed by the behavior anymore. So that is why you've been experiencing the anxiety and the panic attacks. These are both representations of high sympathetic energy in the system.

(00:30:09):

In terms of how it affected your nervous system, I mean it's a little bit of a chicken and an egg thing. I would say your nervous system already was affected, already was dysregulated, which is what led to the behavior of the eating disorder and the eating disorder itself. Anorexia, essentially starving yourself. Yeah, that's going to be really tough on your physiology. So that being in survival mode is going to be reinforced by the fact that your physiology literally would've been in survival mode from a lack of nutrition. So you have the originating cause and then you have it sort of being reinforced by the behavior, which is going to be really stressful on the physiology at the same time that it's a resource for you. Strangely enough, and this is how it is with coping strategies or management strategies. They're often not good for us physiologically, and yet they also do give us some sense of agency and control over our physiology in another sense.

(00:31:13):

So I mean amazing that you had managed to stop the behavior, and I hear you, there's still tendencies and that's normal. What we want to do is help you work directly with the sympathetic energy that's been unlocked. There's many ways you can do that with a lot of sympathetic energy, especially if there was early developmental trauma, which is likely given the adaptation of the eating disorder. It's probably going to be important to focus on the resourcing building capacity side of things before maybe working directly with that sympathetic energy. So again, researching your resources. What are your other resources for you that help you feel a little soothed? A little settled containment practices, the containment lessons, the layers, lessons, self touch, kidney, adrenal work, watering the brainstem, which comes out on Friday if you're a new member. In the additional resources section, there is a whole list of practices in the most frequently asked questions section where it says, I have early developmental trauma.

(00:32:21):

What are some of the best practices for supporting growing capacity and regulation? It's something along those lines. Just review the list of neurosensory exercises under that frequently asked question. Course not all of them are going to work the same for everybody, but those are the ones that, generally speaking, you should be able to find some of those that help you essentially feel a little bit more grounded, a little bit more resourced, a little bit more connected to yourself in a gentle way, which is what we want to do to help your system start to build a bigger container, to be able to process these energies. Now I'm making an assumption there, in case I'm wrong, and you already have all that capacity and you're ready to work with the sympathetic energy. There's lots of ways that you can do that too. Mostly going to be connected to following your impulse.

(00:33:12):

What didn't get to happen that wants to happen now? What is that sympathetic energy wanting to do? Again, please bear in mind it's possible you need to build capacity first, but I also have to mention this in case that's not the case, which would be, well, what does my body want to do with this energy? I have all this anxiety, which is essentially, it's a flight response. If we look at the nervous system physiology, what does that flight response want to do? Sometimes we can do this just with the imagination. We might just start to visualize what is this energy, this panic that I'm feeling? What would it have me do? I would run screaming out the door into the forest. Okay, alright, I'm going to imagine that and maybe feel it in my body. What happens is I give myself permission to imagine that maybe that's enough to start.

(00:34:00):

Then maybe the legs get involved. Maybe as I'm seeing myself run, I start to let my legs run a little bit, in sitting and maybe that's something totally else wants to happen. This is where it's really about your impulses. But when we're talking about working with what's essentially a strong flight response, it's about how can I find a way to mobilize this energy in my body that helps give me a sense of doing that, which I didn't get to do. So, alright, that's all I have on that one. And then before I move on to the next one, Jen, would you like to add anything to that?

Jen (00:34:36):

Just one thing, Seth, which is that alongside everything you mentioned, another way, which is the same thing, just a very earlier way to think about it is that sometimes people who focus on pre and perinatal trauma can see anorexia as representing a bind that we can get set up with

very early because when we're developing, we receive life really through the umbilical cord. And so if we're receiving toxicity through the umbilical cord, then toxicity and nourishment get kind of bound together because we have no choice but to take in what's coming through if we want to survive. And so just something else that it could potentially explore if it resonates is to see sort of do I have the ability to take in nourishment? Do I have that sense of that yum, or is going back to over coupling, is nourishment potentially over coupled with disgust or toxicity or something that was not really nourishing to your system? And so that could just be something else to check out and see if it applies in your case that may or may not, but...

Seth (00:35:55):

Great. Yeah. Okay. "I'm an alumni, fourth round. A friend committed suicide. I'm in shock and high arousal and lots of anger at her, and my early developmental trauma of death and abandonment is very triggered. I do connect to the earth, I do slow breaths. I talk to my inner child, however, it feels too much. And energetically it's different if someone dies, which is of course a great loss, but suicide is highly aggressive. She had been a nice girl. What do you suggest to calm down, to regulate, especially my anger towards her." Okay. Sorry to hear that. That is really painful. Of course, anytime we lose someone is painful. And this is of course an inevitable part of life. Losing someone through suicide is especially, yes, can be especially traumatized and painful. And it sounds like you have a history of early developmental trauma that includes death and abandonment first.

(00:36:58):

Know that what you're feeling now is of course not just about now. It's about, of course it is about now, and it's about this loss and all of your anger and your grief is valid, and it's also scooping up all this stuff from the past. So it's going to feel extra, extra charged. Okay, what I'm actually hearing in this is that, I mean, you're asking about how to calm down, and you're connecting to earth, you're doing slow breaths, you're talking to your inner child. These are all very good, capacity building, regulating, connection, all of that stuff, really good. And it sounds like you need to let yourself get angry. It's okay to be rageful at this person. Grief is not logical, and anger and rage at the person that's gone is a normal part of the grief process. Very often we don't give ourselves permission to express that, because we would feel guilty.

(00:38:02):

We would feel like, oh, how can I possibly let myself be mad at this person who just died? But it actually needs to happen, a lot of the time, it sounds like. And it's not like you need to stay that way, but it sounds like there's a lot of anger and aggression and rage that really does need to move through your system. So I would suggest exploring some of the healthy aggression practices, since you are doing such a good job of self-care and connection and capacity building and all of this stuff. Let's see if we can find a doorway perhaps for some of this rage to move through. Because I think once you give yourself permission to rage at them, that of course can be a connection into your early stuff and that anger as well. Perhaps this is like a rage that is existential in nature.

(00:38:50):

Even if you can let yourself access and express some of that, I think it'll give your system breathing room to actually let the grief itself to process. And it sounds like the grief is maybe getting blocked because the rage isn't being given permission to express. So it's okay to do that. It's okay to do that. In terms of processing grief itself, you're already doing lots of good things. Grief is essentially a really powerful wave that moves through the body generally from the gut up through the head. We want to work on opening up our diaphragms as much as possible to allow this big voltage charge to move through. I've talked about this a lot on past calls, how the experience of grief when it directly moves through the body is extremely intense. It's also quite powerful. A lot of times it's experienced as tightness and constriction that is very painful, but that tightness and constriction is not actually the grief.

(00:39:51):

It's the body constricting against the grief, trying to hold it. So we want to see if we can open those containers, can we really allow the respiratory diaphragm to sob? There's a lot that needs to often move physically in that diaphragm in order for this grief to be resolved, which happens often through sobbing and tears. Can we allow the throat to be open and the lungs to be open and let this big wave to just move on through, a lot of grief processing is about getting out of the way of the energy of it, that wants to come through our body. So that's the other piece to it. Jen, anything else on that one from you?

Jen (00:40:33):

Nope.

Seth (00:40:34):

Alrighty. Over to you.

Jen (00:40:38):

Okay, next question. “What is the reason that despite all the exercises and the theory, my shoulders are still in freeze, painful and unwilling to give me any information during the three rounds I've been doing? Thank you.” So I'm going to read it one more time just to see if you all hear this too. “What is the reason that despite all the exercises and the theory, my shoulders are still in freeze, painful and unwilling to give me any information during the three rounds that I'm currently doing? Thank you.” So sometimes when we have a long standing pattern, we can get into a dynamic with a relationship with that pattern, almost like it's a person. And so really what I am, when I hear how you worded your question, it really sounds like there's some frustration coming through. And so one of the things I'd be curious about is that when we have early developmental trauma, and you didn't mention that specifically, but given the longstanding nature of the pattern, I'm going to imagine that's the case, when EDT is in the picture.

(00:41:58):

It's very common to direct our healthy aggression internally because we weren't safe or supported in learning to express it externally. And so one way to approach this would be to be curious about, like, okay, am I actually feeling some frustration, some irritation, right? My shoulders are unwilling, right? That sounds like you might be a little frustrated. So what would it be like to find a way to direct that externally? So not, but at your shoulders, but maybe something that represents to you. So working with healthy aggression and seeing what happens there. The other thing that can be happening when we have a longstanding pattern that's not changing is we may simply need to keep growing capacity. I hear that you've done a few rounds and so you may already have to be in the process of doing this, and sometimes with really long standing patterns. And if we have a lifelong pattern, for example, and if early developmental trauma is in the picture, it can really take time for us to grow the capacity needed to work with what's in there. One other thought back to healthy aggression is that a lot of times the impulses toward healthy aggression can be up in our traps, in our shoulders, in our neck. And so the area that you're speaking about here, your shoulders also were another clue that made me curious about healthy aggression.

(00:43:24):

Another way to approach this is that sometimes when we have an area that's really tight before, and as I found this work, I had what felt like a cement block in my chest for years that despite yoga and breathing and all these things, it didn't really change that much. And so I really relate to having something that is uncomfortable and doesn't move. And so sometimes it can be helpful to actually work with other areas. And Feldenkrais, one of the main principles is that we're really looking at how can we use more of ourselves to do whatever it is we might be wanting to do. And so that would be like with a shoulder, for example. I can just reach like this where the movement is really isolated in my shoulder and arm or I can, this is my right arm. I can feel how my left foot can push into the ground and come all the way up through my rib cage and my spine, and the movement becomes much easier.

(00:44:23):

And you probably noticed I could reach much further. And so we can apply this same principle to working with any specific of ourselves. And so the Feldenkrais practices could be something to explore, but also the diaphragms practices, opening up space in the area you're working with, but also below in the lower part of the torso and in the pelvis and the connection between the pelvis and the feet. So the diaphragms might be helpful. Also, as we mentioned, sometimes we can really hold things in the fascia for a long time, the experiences that started early. So working with layers, tense and relax, actually going into the tension could be another option. Finding the painful and the pleasant. So all of those could be things to explore as well as exploring on the ground so that your shoulders actually have support and you're not sort of having to hold them up and explore at the same time. So what might it be like to really let your shoulders rest back into the ground, if you're exploring any of those practices?

(00:45:38):

There was one other thing. Let me see what I wanted to mention here. Oh, the principle also that I spoke about earlier about the less you do, the more you notice. Sometimes when we have something that's not shifting and we want it to, we can really kind of have this more is better or let me kind of will or force my way through it. And sometimes when that's the case, actually a lighter touch, just noticing the littlest bit or just almost like a butterfly could land on your shoulder, for example. But just sort of exploring with a really light touch to see what happens there. And that might be challenging at first, especially if there's frustration in the

mix. So working with the frustration if that's present alongside the other approaches could be supportive sometimes too. Seth, you've talked about this, that it can just help to have body work for those really long held tension patterns.

(00:46:33):

Having someone really get in there physically can be supportive. If that's an option, we might discover emotions or other experiences held in there. Bowen can be a gentle way to start. Also, a skilled Feldenkrais practitioner could potentially be helpful. If you have more capacity, then you might look at something like osteopathy, or rolfing, and whichever way you go, if you explore the bodywork route, just know that the practitioner and their ability to listen is key. Because so much of this work is about listening and attunement. And so finding a practitioner who works in that way and has the ability to listen out and work with you can really make a difference. Anything you want to add there, Seth? Before I go to part two of this question.

Seth (00:47:26):

Just one piece, because yeah, I also hear the aggression in the question and oftentimes when we're expressing like I'm so frustrated, or you're not saying this, but I hear this, I'm frustrated about this situation in my shoulders, but the reality is these shoulders are frustrated, the anger is in the traps, is in the shoulders. So if that's the case, like you mentioned, Jen, working with healthy aggression can be really important. And I just want to note that you can titrate that. So if you don't have one of these things, I suggest getting one of these things. Hey, we've got twin TheraBands.

(00:48:09):

So this is the TheraBand flex bar, and these are really handy. So in the healthy aggression article, I talk about using a towel and twisting the towel, and that works as well, but these are even a little bit better, and you can get them in different resistances. So this is the easiest, I think. Then there's a blue one that's a little more resistant, and a red one, which is a lot more resistant. So depending on your strength level and how much energy you want to use, and this, if you just look at what's required with the shoulders for me to start to twist. So what might it be like to really titrate that, to get one of these things, or a towel, if you don't have one, and just to hold it in your hands at first. And imagine the beginning of this kind of ringing of the neck motion, just really titrating that. And then listening to the shoulders, and maybe you do a little bit more. How can you feel that, activate the shoulders, that kind of thing. That's it.

Jen (00:49:11):

And then the one other thing that you reminded me of, Seth, actually, was that sometimes, well, I'm going to talk about this later actually, but I'll just plant the seed that sometimes with healthy aggression, it can be helpful to also be in a relationship as we explore healthy aggression. But I'll talk about that a little bit more, a little later. Okay, so there's a part two to this question, which I'll just address briefly. And you ask, "If you're sleeping and a tracker shows that you average about half an hour to an hour of deep sleep per night, would that kind of sleep be considered low tone, dorsal? How can you tell whether you've truly rested in that state or not? Thank you." So from time to time, we get these waves of questions about trackers and devices, and I'm not sure specifically what you're tracking here.

(00:50:05):

You don't say, so I can't say about, often we're in a mix of states while we sleep and low tone dorsal is involved when we're having more restful sleep. But what's important here is to really trust your experience. So what matters is do you feel rested? If you feel exhausted, your tracker is saying like, wow, you got a great night's sleep. You probably want to listen to the fact that you feel rested and vice versa. So they can be helpful oftentimes in tracking trends over time, again, relative to yourself and looking for clues and being like, Hmm, what do I notice? And just really an invitation to grow awareness of what might be happening, but really to come back to trusting your own experience and just using them where it's helpful to gently grow awareness. Is there anything else you'd like to add on that one, Seth?

Seth (00:51:04):

The only thing I'll add to that is depending on what you're using, just know that it's possible that the tracker itself may be stimulating your system. So if you're wearing a Fitbit that's on and receiving wifi signals, and at night, that alone can be agitating to your nervous system. So sometimes with these devices, we may not put the two and two together that, like, oh, these are emitting powerful electromagnetic fields that have an effect. I never sleep with my phone on or near me. My phone is always off in a different room because these things do have an effect, especially on the nervous system. And the more regulated we get, paradoxically, often the more we may notice that the effect that these, what were called non-native EMFs, electromagnetic fields that are not natural, have an effect. So I just wanted to put those two sets in there that yeah, trust your inner knowing and how you feel, right? How your body feels.

And then you also look at evidence like how's your digestion? The things that happen in low tone dorsal are cell repair, barrier keeping in the gut, digestion. So how are those autonomic processes for you? Those may be a better clue.

Jen (00:52:26):

And I was just going to say, it might be worth popping in the playlist, about the quantum and circadian practices, just if people are interested in those topics.

Seth (00:52:35):

Yeah, yeah, we'll put that in the additional resources. And if you want to pop that in the chat, Susan, there's a YouTube playlist all on circadian rhythm and health, which is a great supplement to this work, goes really well with the nervous system work and is very supportive. And again, please remember all the resources that we mentioned get posted in the chat, will also be on the replay page of the call. So you don't have to try to frantically write it all down now. It'll all be there. Okay. All right. "Hello. I fit many criteria for autism. I'm a female, 53. I heard Seth talk about ADHD and autism in vlogs a while ago, and he said, what I understand to be true, that there is most likely a brain difference with autism. I've always wondered lately if the world is just crazy as so many people seem to fit the criteria, if it's just trauma. My question is if there is a brain difference, how does this impact my ability to heal dysregulation? I have early developmental trauma for sure, and other trauma."

(00:53:42):

So this is, I want to acknowledge, first, can be a somewhat charged topic for many people. I'm going to approach this from the lens of nervous system health and what we know about that, which sometimes doesn't always go directly with what other people may feel or express around autism. It exists along a vast spectrum. That's something that everyone can agree about, because there is everything from people who are completely non-functioning and need care their whole life in order to make it through. And there's people who now are called autistic who previously would've just been called eccentric. They're totally functioning and they just have some quirks. And now all of this is being lumped under the term autism, which I'm not sure is helpful or not because what we see is that yes, most if not all of the expressions along that entire spectrum can be traced to dysregulation and trauma at some level.

(00:54:45):

Now, that may be very severe trauma in utero, chemical exposure, things like that could be behind some of what appear to be the more severe cases. There may be things that we don't understand involved. Certainly genetics seems to be part of it, but epigenetics shows us that genetics is not a lock, right? You're born with genetic tendencies and the environment acts on that genetic genome, the genome, and it encourages the expression of particular tendencies. So we generally will have a maladaptive expression of our genome and an optimal expression of our genome. And the more stress and trauma and interference we experience from in utero onwards, the more that maladaptive expression of the genome is encouraged to present. So it's really difficult and tricky when we start talking about these things because yes, the brain may be different, but the reason the brain is different may be because of early trauma and dysregulation, and that could have a whole host of causes. So it is a tricky subject that I don't think we fully understand yet. But from the lens of this work, yes, it does seem that trauma is involved at some level.

(00:56:06):

Now, something you mentioned here, I always wondered lately if the world is just crazy because so many people fit the criteria. A lot of people, in my opinion, who are labeled as autistic, it's the result of what happens when a creative person gets confronted with a system that wants them to live in survival mode and they can't fit themselves into that. The world is sick in terms of how society functions. There's the old Krishnamurti quote, being well adapted to a profoundly sick society is no measure of health. So people who can't fit themselves into the mold of the survival driven system may then be called autistic because they just can't adapt to something that is actually not good for us. So there's so much complexity in this in terms of how this relates to you, and if there is a brain difference, and how it may impact your ability to heal.

(00:57:06):

What's important to note is that the nervous system supports the ability of the brain. So even if there is a brain difference, you can still do this work by working at the autonomic level, and maybe you do it in a slightly different way, or maybe your path through it is different, maybe it takes longer. I'm not sure. It depends on each individual, but how our brain works is fundamentally supported by how our autonomic nervous system is working. And when we're in survival mode, we don't have as much access to all the creative parts of our brain. Or maybe we have an adaptation where we're just hyper fixated in those creative parts of our brain. Like

this can be one expression that's often under that umbrella is people who get hyper creative and can't pull themselves out of the creative tasks they're doing. And maybe there's actually a need to connect more to what's happening in the limbic brain.

(00:58:09):

It all depends on how we adapt and how we survive what we learn to do. But generally speaking, no, I don't think that having that diagnosis or being in that umbrella of what we call autism is any impediment to doing this work. As long as you're able to be here, showing up, asking these questions, doing the lessons, you're able to create change in your system. So just keep on doing the work. Follow your own unique impulses as to what you want to do, how you want to engage with it. Again, that's the foundation, right? And if you're someone who identifies as autistic, that sometimes is even more important is how do you want to come through this work? What is right for your system? So that may mean maybe you don't go in the logical order of lab one, lab two, lab three, lab four. Maybe you skip around a bit, maybe you just stay with one thing. Lemme just check my notes here. Yeah, I think that's it, Jen. Is there anything you want to add to that?

Jen (00:59:21):

Nope.

Seth (00:59:22):

Okay.

Seth (00:59:22):

Great.

Jen (00:59:24):

Next question. Carry on, carry on, carry on, carry on.

(00:59:29):

Carry on. Okay, so next question. "I'm a third SBSM timer." So I think this is your third round, "with early developmental trauma and fibromyalgia. I've had a good process with thawing

some body parts by working with traveling pain, stiffness in my hips, back, left arm, and leg. The blockage and pain now feels in the neck and the brainstem,” excuse me, “could you please recap on how the emotions got stuck there and what exercises I can do to help it move? Thank you.” Okay, so there's a few elements to this. The first one, it sounds like this may not, you might already be doing this, because you mentioned that you're having good progress. But one thing that I want to mention, just because you talk about traveling pain, is that sometimes we can have traveling pain, and the tendency can just be to follow it around and follow it around, follow it around, and it moves and moves and moves.

(01:00:34):

And so if that's the case, making sure that we're creating a base of regulation. So for example, let's say we're doing the kidney adrenal practices and our left toe starts to move. Sometimes it might be helpful to pause and to work with what's happening in the left toe, but if we find that that's always happening and we're kind of ping ponging around ourselves, then it sort of can be helpful sometimes to say, oh, hi left toe, I hear you, and I'm going to stay with my adrenals here for the time being. So just if you think about it, what helps to grow self-regulation in the first place is when we're little people and there's an attuned other that's there offering the steady presence while these different things are going on. So if you're someone who has pain moving all around and you're not noticing a whole lot of growth in capacity and your ability to settle, then that might be something to notice.

(01:01:30):

But as I said, it sounds like that might not be the case here because you are noticing good progress. So the next thing is that you ask about stuckness. And so a lot of times when we're talking about stuckness, the way earlier, the tension, the shoulders, or I had the block in my chest, really what's happening is that an area is often sort of tense or braced or holding so it can feel stuck because we don't have a lot of movement there yet, or access to movement. And really what we're talking about is an attention pattern. You ask about how the emotions got stuck there. So I also want to mention we might feel emotions as that area softens with time. We might also feel sensation, there might be an impulse to move or we might want to make sound so we may discover different things.

(01:02:27):

All those elements of SIBAM, that we referenced earlier, as an area starts to soften and become less held, embraced. So in terms of what you can do to help it move, it sounds like I would say the things that you're already doing, since you're having a lot of experiences of things thawing and moving, so keep doing what you're doing. The other thing that you might, other practices you might explore are the kidney adrenal practices, watering the brainstem, the longer orientation with the head and the neck, the gut brain connection, the gentle head rolling, and again, kind of going back to the layers often to see kind of where it can be interesting to maybe see if the holding feels like, or the stuckness, to use your word, feels like, it's more in one layer than another.

(01:03:23):

The other thing also, the Feldenkrais practices, that's the idea of exploring through gentle movement and awareness, and then also allowing ourselves to find support in different areas, so that one specific area doesn't have to work so hard, and that can also help to grow access to experience of safety and settling. The other thing you mentioned, Seth, is that sometimes that as we grow more capacity and peel away layers of freeze, we start to hone in more on the more deeply held older patterns of holding. And so brainstem often goes with vigilance and it's an area that a lot of us who come to this work, a lot of us have a lot of tension. And so sometimes it can take time and growing capacity and peeling things away before we really can come into contact and feel that. And so that may be helpful to know, and it can, and just to know that maybe it's a good thing that you're now experiencing this, and it can just take time too, right, time and repetition and coming back to an area to let it know that it really is okay to just sort of let it soften and move and have a different experience than maybe what you've had your whole life.

(01:04:47):

So Seth, would you add anything else there?

Seth (01:04:53):

Yeah, I was just looking through the site because I couldn't remember which lesson this lab was, or which lab. This lesson I was going to mention is in, because I was thinking about it, the gut brain connection lesson. Just scanning here real quick. Where is that?

Jen (01:05:13):

Is it in lab eight? Maybe?

Seth (01:05:14):

That might be in lab... No, no, it's a later one. Seven, perhaps. Yes, lab seven. So yeah, gut brain awareness and intentions, definitely explore that as well. I would say because there's a big, sometimes the brainstem won't let go until the belly feels a little bit more. Okay. When we're talking about survival physiology, everything is involved. But there's three big areas that we will primarily work with. Kidney adrenals, that's often the first place we'll work, the gut, viscera and brainstem. These are the three primary sort of alarm centers. So the gut often will hold a lot of tension in the fascia and in the musculature, in the form of bracing patterns in the abdomen. This is very common when we grow up in a hostile feeling environment or toxic environment and we're just constantly protecting our belly, our soft undersides. And the brainstem is yes, about hypervigilance and being constantly on guard, constantly scanning the environment for danger. And these two things will often work together, and sometimes the doorway into the brainstem softening is by first working with the viscera. I'm going to suggest before you get to your next one, Jen, that we take a little pause, as it's just past 11. We've got probably about 30 minutes left, so if we want to have a little, you want to go to the bathroom, get something to drink, have a little stretch, walk around. Let's resume again in about three or four minutes.

Seth (01:07:01):

Sounds good? Alright. Okay.

Seth (01:10:40):

I think the next one is still you, Jen? Yeah.

Jen (01:10:42):

Yep, yep, yep. Okay.

Seth (01:10:44):

Great.

Jen (01:10:46):

So next question, "Clarity on a pattern. I have a long standing pattern of right shoulder pain. Some days I wake up with no pain and feel great. Some days I wake up with a kinked shoulder. I notice that on good days I have a lot of energy and on the painful days I am more tired. I think this pattern is a freeze-like response in my system. Could the good days be due to freeze having lifted or not activated overnight? I have early developmental trauma and shock trauma and this is my third round of SBSM." Okay, so a lot of what we've all already talked about may be helpful here. So if you are here, you might go back and review the call, and if you're just hearing that now, you might go back and review what we've talked about. But, so what you're hypothesizing could be true, but I am also wondering if there's a chance that the opposite may be more likely, which is that as we talked about earlier, it's common for responses to come up in our sleep, in our dreams.

(01:12:01):

And so sometimes protective responses such as an impulse to flee or to fight can show up in our dreams. Excuse me. So another possibility is that you might actually be working through some healthy aggression, right? You might actually be punching someone in your sleep or pushing them away, and then having expressed that in the night could lead to less freeze in the morning and having more access to energy. So that's also a possibility. So a way to explore that would be to work with that kink, to tune into that kink, see if there's an impulse there, maybe see if there's anything in the neighborhood of healthy aggression that wants to express there. So gently, if you were to follow the tension or go with it, what might want to happen there. And if you wake up in the night, you could do that, or in the morning, then you notice the kink.

(01:13:01):

But you can also do that at another time during the day, when you have time, when you want to explore. And this can even be when the kink isn't present, right, on a day when the kink isn't present. You can do it both ways, but to really kind of listen in, go with the tension and see what might want to happen there. So that is a way, something to be curious about and then see what you discover. You can also, in terms of working with it, you can also work with the other shoulder, often can be helpful. It's a kind of a principle that we explore in Feldenkrais. So the different parts of ourselves talk to one another so you can explore both shoulders and see if that informs your right shoulder at all. You can also, the diaphragms practices, the finding the painful and the pleasant, the tense and relax, and layers, all come to mind as practices that you might explore related to the pattern that you're noticing. And the last thing I'll say before I

check in with you, Seth, to see if you want to add anything is to remember what we've been talking about with that less is more principle. Sometimes when something is repetitive, doing less, slowing down can help us to notice in more detail and see if anything else might want to happen.

(01:14:24):

Anything you would add, Seth?

Seth (01:14:28):

Nope. All good.

Seth (01:14:32):

All right. "I have a question relating to the relationship to my younger brother. There's a lot of early developmental trauma for both of us, but also transgenerational trauma, which causes conflicts that are not ours. We tried to distinguish those in the past, but it has now switched to hate and no contact at all on his part. I do my work to heal, but it is tough to do while not knowing how the situation will resolve. There's a lot of practical stuff attached. Also, it's hard to put into words like a question, I guess, how to navigate." So this is very similar to question one, talking about relational dynamics between siblings. So I had the same experience essentially as it sounds like, as your brother. So I have an older sister and as I got into this work and became more regulated and healthy, I became more and more aware of how dysfunctional and unhealthy my connection with her was.

(01:15:45):

And I wasn't aware enough at the time to find a better solution and maybe there was no better solution. The only thing I could think to do was essentially blow that relationship up because there was a lot of behavior she was doing that felt really toxic to me. That was of course rooted in the same trauma dynamic we both grew up with. But I couldn't find any escape for myself. And the way that she was behaving was so intense for me that I didn't even feel like I could engage in a resolution process with her. It honestly felt to me the only way out was to just completely blow up the relationship, which I did by being quite aggressive and hateful, unfortunately because I was still acting out of my end of that trauma bond that had been formed through both growing up in this toxic soup.

(01:16:46):

Now, I don't know if I was right or wrong, it's likely there was a better way to do this, but what the end result was is that, and this is what I wanted, is I made it such that she didn't want to have anything to do with me because I felt like as long as she was wanting something to do with me, I still felt that. I still felt like these tendrils reaching out, trying to grab onto me and I couldn't heal with that. So yeah, that's what I did. And it sounds like your brother, maybe, has gone the same route, the nuclear option essentially. And what happened was once I was able to get that space for myself and I no longer felt like she had any interest in me, then I was able to heal my end of that toxic relationship and process.

(01:17:40):

All the stuff I had gone through with her and abuse I had experienced from her growing up, and I couldn't have done that in a relationship with her. I know that. So these things can get messy like that. Thankfully what happened was, as I was able to do that work, because I had gotten out, no contact, and she didn't want anything to do with me, and I didn't feel her grasping after me, I was able to process all that stuff. And then interestingly, she started getting into somatic work unbeknownst to me on her own, and started working at that level. Eventually what happened was I realized, you know what I now actually realize, I can feel how I missed that connection. Whereas before that connection was only a source of survival stress for me. Now I can feel how I actually want that again. So it's only by the grace of having no contact and having her not come after me that I was able to get to a place where I could organically reengage.

(01:18:53):

And then we went through a facilitated work together, working with a trauma informed, an SEP who also worked with family systems. We did a year or a year and a half of monthly sessions together. And now we have a wonderful relationship that's authentic and is no longer, it's a new relationship, but the old one had to be broken first. That was the case. So I tell that story to encourage you to let your brother go. I hear you. There's practical considerations and that may have to be addressed at some point. However, the chances are best for you to find some kind of resolution and healing if you just accept the no contact, that is what he needs, and hopefully he will do his work to come back to a place where he can come back into connection

with you. But I pretty much can guarantee it's not going to happen if you keep on trying to engage.

(01:19:51):

I don't know if you're doing that or not, but I want to encourage you to understand it's okay to let it go and that is the best possibility for facilitating something different to happen. It may create an opening in him, that safety of, just like it did in me. So if that isn't the case and there is unfortunately no healing, sometimes that's the way it goes. When we grow up with trauma and dysregulation, it can be difficult to find a good outcome. And sometimes the best we can get is you know what, let's just both go on with our lives as we are without this connection. And maybe at some point, because you say there's practical considerations, you do have to engage in some kind of business-like aspect about practical negotiations. Maybe it's inheritance stuff or property that's shared and you can do that maybe with a facilitator, someone who can be a professional facilitator between the two of you. So that's what I have to say for all that. And then in terms of yourself, yes, it'll be about processing all the stuff that comes with letting go of that relationship, the grief, the anger, whatever it is. Jen, anything else on that one?

Jen (01:21:10):

The thing, Seth, is that I had a long time teacher who was dear to me, and she would say she did a lot of work with relationships, and it was quite common that people who would be seeking her help would have some sort of challenge with a partner or a sibling, someone they were close to. And she would encourage people to hold a vision of how you want things to be while you accept what you need to do now. And that always really helped me, that it doesn't mean... that I can hold within myself the relationship I would ideally like to have someday, without being attached to it, and then I can do what I need to do now. Yeah.

Seth (01:21:52):

Great. That's lovely.

Jen (01:21:55):

Next question. "I'm on my second round of SBSM. A lot of old memories are resurfacing and I'm renegotiating them. I've done several rounds of annihilation work, which feels great, but I

notice the same memories and people keep coming up. Should I be doing something differently or is this just part of working through layers? It feels like there's progress and some things are more resolved now." So, a couple things here. First of all, one of the things that we're often asking in this work is anything different. And so as you're noticing progress and some things are resolved now, then what you're doing may be working, and it's just a matter of there's layers that you're working through of annihilation. So that's definitely one possibility. Something else is that sometimes different elements of our experience will change according to different timeframes. So for example, you say that the same memories and people are coming up, but is the impulse different?

(01:23:04):

Is the intensity of the annihilation, the healthy aggression that's coming up, is that different? Is how it shows up different? So sometimes we can look, even though one element of our experience hasn't changed much is another element different. So that's something else to look for often too. We may notice, the changes we may notice for a while can be subtle. So are the people coming up but it doesn't feel as stressful. Do the memories feel different when they surface? So you can look for these sort of little changes that also give us clues that things are changing. So it sounds though on the whole of things, it sounds like memories resurfacing is a clue that capacity is growing. You're renegotiating them. Excuse me, I'm finding my words. So it sounds like you're definitely doing good work here and things are changing, if you're curious, or if someone's listening, or if you hit a point where you're working with a response and you don't notice a change in the pattern, then there's a few possibilities.

(01:24:18):

And again, I'm not suggesting this as a case here because you are noticing things changing. I'm just sharing this as an FYI. So when we're not noticing a pattern changing, it may be a clue that we need to continue growing capacity, to sort of hold what's held in the pattern. It may also be a clue that we could benefit from titrating more, doing less. And we gave a number of examples earlier today in the call about what that might look like. Often as we do less, we notice that there may be something else that needs to happen or that wants to happen. And this can be really common, especially in healthy aggression work. So for example, as we slow down and we do less, we might notice that, oh, actually my gut gets really tight before I go to hit someone, to do my punch, or to blast someone with my laser eyes. And so then we can

make space to be with what's happening in the gut or the chest or the throat. So making space for what else might want to happen.

(01:25:22):

We may not also need to do this, I started to mention this earlier, but sometimes we need to do healthy work, with healthy aggression and a relationship. So we might need to be witnessed or to really kind of feel that human contact, that can be powerful. And sometimes too that can be powerful in disconnecting the shame that can often go with healthy aggression and knowing that oh, this is actually a healthy energy. There's a lot of vitality here when I work with it consciously, which is very different than when anger shows up in a reactive way.

(01:25:59):

The other thing is that even if we do that, we might benefit from titrating more, doing a little bit less. It can still sometimes feel good to just let things rip, especially if we're someone who grew up and it wasn't okay to express our anger. Just really feeling that aliveness and that strength go through this, through us, hearing our voice, right. There can be real benefits in doing that alongside the more specific titrated work when that's needed. And the other thing is you mentioned, I'm not specifically sure how you're working with this. You just talk about several rounds of annihilation work and you mentioned memories. So another thing, going back to SIBAM, could be to notice, okay, when I work with this healthy, with this annihilation, am I noticing, okay, there's movement that wants to happen. Is there a sound that wants to happen? Do I feel sensation or emotion? Do I feel my anger viscerally? Do I see an image? It does sound with the memories and the people. It sounds like you have access to images. So just kind of noticing are those different elements available as you're working with this? So yeah, would you add anything there, Seth?

Seth (01:27:19):

The only thing that I thought of is what you named in terms of it may be something different wants to happen as you slow stuff down, just to have in your awareness that with annihilation work and aggression, and really giving ourselves permission to embody and express what is essentially a sadistic aggressive urge, there can be underneath that, a powerful grief sometimes. So just to have that in your awareness. And if that's the case, the way you'll get in touch with that is through this idea of slowing down, doing less, noticing what else is happening, and also being open to spontaneous change. So for example, I saw Peter do a

demo once that was all about healthy aggression. It was a woman who had been assaulted, and she was in the process of beating the shit out of her attacker, and he had given her a big Zafu pillow she had in her lap and she goes like this, smashing the pillow.

(01:28:21):

And then she did that a few times, got that energy moving, great. But he asked her to do it like, okay, this time just get ready and just feel the readiness, feel the energy, feel the readiness to smash, let that build, and then let go of the need to smash, and just see what wants to happen organically. And this is what happened. She got ready, she got ready, she let it build. And then this is what happened, this opening of the chest and the sternum and this wonderful space that came through the body. So we may get attached to a certain action, and that may have been super necessary, and we always want to be open to the possibility that our physiology may now want to do something else. So just have that in your awareness, that there is a spontaneity that can arise. And that is sometimes the case if we feel like something is stuck.

(01:29:22):

Also to just note that thoughts and images are often the last thing to change. You're noticing all the changes that are happening, which is great. You're still getting these images like Jen said, well, is the aggression still there or is it just the image? Because if you're having the images come in but you don't feel that tremendous aggression, well that's kind of normal that very often we will work through the survival charge, but the brain still offers up the same images for a while. Sometimes that's the case. And if that's the case, it's an opportunity to just orient to something else because it's essentially, it can just be like a mental loop. But when we do the aggression work, what tends to happen is the charge and the urgency greatly diminishes and the frequency tends to diminish over time as well of intrusive images.

(01:30:17):

All right, last one for me. And then I think Jen has one more. "Hi. As I continue to do this work, I'm noticing how things like notice, feel, be with et cetera are actually really difficult for me. I have a lot of blockages between myself and the feelings slash sensations like fear, judgment, shame, shut down, overthinking and gaslighting myself. All things I've probably learned from my caregivers." Absolutely. Or maybe from a school system, or yeah, there's many opportunities to learn these types of things. "I'm realizing this might be why I'm dissociated and derealized most of the time. Tips for working through this?" So absolutely, this is a classic

experience with early developmental trauma. There is an experience where it's like we went into survival mode so early that the concept of slowing down and noticing what's happening sounds good in theory, but I go to do that and I don't notice anything, or it's really difficult.

(01:31:26):

Or as soon as I notice something, I start criticizing myself for it or I feel shame about it. And that is a really common experience with early developmental trauma. So you didn't mention early developmental trauma in your question, but again, this is something that we would commonly see, this inability to connect the self. And when we do, it comes loaded with all this judgment and criticism, all that kind of stuff. So in terms of tips for working through it, it's about being very simple. So we want to start with the most basic biological things in terms of what you're paying attention to. Just like can you notice when you're hungry? And then can you say to yourself, oh, I'm hungry, I think I'll go eat something. And then can you do that when you need to go pee? Can you notice I need to go pee?

(01:32:19):

And you don't just sit there and bear down and ignore it. You go do it when you need to pass gas, you do that provided it's not going to cause more shame and embarrassment. Maybe you go to the bathroom, whatever, get the drift. Listen to your most basic biological impulses. Name them when you notice them, honor them as soon as possible. Notice what that feels like. Start with these most basic things. Then maybe you start to bring in, with that little bit of orientation. So maybe you start to include things like, oh, I can feel my butt on the chair. That is sometimes a not very loaded thing to notice. It's like, yep, I can just feel that there's a chair underneath my butt. Alright, whoop do.

(01:33:12):

There's a lot. I had a client who was just like, yeah, I spent so long. Yeah, I can feel my butt on the chair. So what? Who gives a shit? Yeah, totally get it. There's a lot there. And it comes with what else can happen as you feel your butt on the chair. Okay, can you feel that? And can you see what's around you while still feeling your butt on the chair? Can you notice that you're breathing as you look around and feel your butt on the chair? Again, the most basic sensorial, biological things, just focus on that. And it may be that that's all you do through this round and all the way through next year into the next round. That's totally okay. When we're building our awareness of self, it may take a lot of practice just to be with these very simple experiences.

(01:34:09):

The other piece may be, you start to bring in, because I hear that there's a lot of criticism. Maybe when that happens, you criticize yourself, you gaslight yourself, you deny your own experience, you feel shame. Just name that, name that out loud. I'm feeling, I notice that I'm hungry and now I, okay, I'm feeling shame. I notice that I feel shame. Okay, but I'm going to connect to my hunger and I'm going to go feed myself and notice what that feels like to give myself that nourishment. So name it. If you notice these things coming in, it may happen that those things come in less if you're working more with these more basic biological things. Or maybe it doesn't, maybe it still happens. But either way, that's where I would encourage you to start. The last piece is maybe you start in with some containment or some form of self touch.

(01:35:00):

So I'm sitting on my chair, I can feel my seat on the chair and I can see what's around me. And while I do that, I'm just going to give myself a little touch. Can I feel that, that would be an advanced practice from what you described right now, what's happening? If you can get to the place where you can feel your butt on the chair and see what's around you and just feel contact from yourself, that would be awesome. So try not to set the benchmark too high, building these capacities, and that's totally okay. That is normal. That is how it goes. All right. Anything to add to that, Jen?

Jen (01:35:49):

A couple quick things. One is that sometimes notice, feel, be with, we can feel like we really need to slow down and sometimes people can have a faster pace.

(01:36:02):

But just to know that, the way you said, that's an advanced practice, which I very much relate to because this was, I very much relate to this question, for a long time, personally, but to know that it's okay, you don't have to always slow down. If you have a faster pace, you can move faster. You can do things more quickly because it really is about how do you, the more we try and really introduce change, when our system has a set homeostasis set point for homeostasis that we've had for a long time, the more we try and change things, the more our system kind of just wants us to come back to what we know. And so you were very much speaking to this, Seth, but just add to that, it can be helpful to kind of say, okay, well how do I

just start where I am? Let me know that it's okay for me to be where I am, even if it doesn't feel that way, and then introduce these little things. But it doesn't always have to, because sometimes people talk about how they watch the videos at twice the speed. So just to know that you can respect your pace.

Seth (01:37:14):

Absolutely.

Jen (01:37:15):

Yeah.

Seth (01:37:16):

Maybe you start to notice what it feels like for your ground, your feet to strike the ground as you're walking. Yeah, it doesn't have to be like this sit still calm, meditative thing. Yeah, it could be more active if that's easier. Yeah, great. For sure.

Jen (01:37:30):

Okay, so last question. "I have early developmental trauma and always had problems with my sleep, even from an early age. Every time I go to sleep, I notice a bracing holding in my neck to one side. If I consciously release this bracing, I feel relaxed, but my system's offering signs of relaxation. But a few moments later, the bracing is back. I have birth trauma too. Could this be connected? And how do I work with this? What practitioners or techniques do you think can help release this? Thank you." So given that you mentioned birth trauma and that you've been aware of this pattern from an early age, there's definitely a high likelihood that it could be connected. We often have things from in utero and our birth show up as patterns into adulthood until we learn to work with them in these ways. So you may already be doing this, but coming back to the basics, all the things that Seth was just talking about and the other fundamental practices to really grow capacity and regulation, because when we have a very early experience, they often have a big charge where they can feel very big to the little person.

(01:38:53):

So just knowing that the basics are very important, alongside these other things that I'll talk about, has been a theme this call. When we have a long held pattern of bracing, less is often more right, because what I think I'm hearing you say is that you're able to do something to allow the bracing to soften and release, but then it just comes right back. So when that's the case, that's often a clue that we could benefit from titrating more. So just again, maybe just what's it feel like to just let it be there? Maybe bringing a hand and just even going into the tension a little bit and noticing what wants to happen. Working with the littlest bits to see what you notice. And because often as we do something like we just, okay, here it is, I'm going to release it. There's a lot that could happen in between the pattern and the release.

(01:39:59):

And so for example, if I imagine that I have this bracing here, and for whatever reason for me, when I go into bracing in my neck, my shoulder wants to come up. But if I slow it way down and just do the teeniest bit, I discover something really different wants to happen, right? My head wants to turn to the right, my jaw wants to release. So when we work in these small increments, again, we can notice in more detail what might want to happen. And we often discover things that we may have been missing when we're working with bigger segments of an experience.

(01:40:37):

If this is a very early experience, you might imagine, with the other question earlier, that what if I imagine I'm a baby and I'm having this experience, right? Are there different movements that want to happen? Do I experience this differently if I imagine that I'm experiencing this as a very young person? So that would be a way to explore it. Sometimes it can be helpful to renegotiate a birth experience. This can happen organically as we grow awareness and capacity. And sometimes it can also help to work with a practitioner, as you mentioned, and I'll say a little bit more about that in a moment. Also can look at the elements of you're noticing the bracing. So bringing back SIBAM again, are you noticing the sensations that are held in the bracing? Is there an emotion there? Is there an image, a movement that wants to happen?

(01:41:40):

So looking at those different elements and seeing what else is present, in addition to that, in addition to the bracing and the release, what other elements are you aware of or can you be aware of as you explore that? In terms of some practices, the tense and relax, going into it

could be something to explore. This is more of a generalized practice, but to name those very little titrations that may help to think in terms of micro movements. So just these really small movements that are almost invisible. The Feldenkrais practices may be helpful, specifically potent posture and rolling like a baby. The longer orientation with the head and the neck, the brainstem watering, the brainstem practice that gets released tomorrow. And gut brain comes to mind again, that just because of that very early connection, very early experiences, we tend to experience a lot along our center line, right through our torso up into our head and our skull. As far as practitioners go, a good nervous system practitioner, or I should say an experienced nervous system practitioner who works specifically with early developmental trauma, may well be able to help you. There are also some practitioners who specialize in what's called PPN, pre and perinatal work, and if someone has studied NeuroAffective Touch, that incorporates a lot of elements of pre and perinatal work. So those are some options for you there. And Seth, what else might you add?

Seth (01:43:32):

Nothing specifically to this question so much, but it does just give me the impulse to highlight. An overarching principle of this work that has come up a lot in this call is that when we're dealing with bracing and patterns of tension, chronic constriction, I always am tight in this spot, et cetera. So often the resolution will come not through relaxation, but through working with the tension, allowing the tension to do what it's wanting to do. And that, again, because this is an early developmental trauma call, I'll highlight, that is something that takes capacity. So that is often this dance that we get into when we have early developmental trauma and we're building capacity. We need to work with the tension and find out what the body is wanting to do, how does it want to mobilize, how does it want to express what's wanting to happen that didn't get to happen?

(01:44:31):

All of that stuff. And all of that stuff is high energy work that will potentially unpack emotion, unpack sympathetic energy at a deeper level. And that's why we also say, like, titration, titration, titration. If you're going to start going that route, which yes, pretty much everyone will need to do at some point, just little drops. And you want to do it from a place of knowing what are my resources, what soothes me and settles me. And if you don't have that solid yet, then you don't want to start working with tension yet. So it is just an overarching principle. Just thought that was important to highlight on this specific call.

Jen (01:45:14):

Yeah, and I'll just highlight what you said about the ability to settle, because when we come in with early developmental trauma, some of us, with that history, don't know how to settle.

Seth (01:45:25):

Totally. And that's where you want to start. You've got to first find, how do I at least settle and calm down, using external things. That's step one. So, all right, great. Thanks, Jen.

Jen (01:45:40):

Yeah, thank you, Seth. Thanks.

Seth (01:45:42):

Thank you, Susan. And thank you everybody so much for being here. Really appreciate you, just keep doing it, showing up for yourselves and for those around you with this work, really appreciate you being here. So we'll see you on the next call. I believe there's a break next week. I think it's a rest week. So use that time as you desire. One thing that my trainer used to say in the SEP training and the SE training was, orient towards goodness. So that can be a lovely guiding principle. Sometimes during a break week, how can you orient towards things that are good for you, orient towards things that are easy, useful for you, in the spirit of supporting EDT. So, all right, we'll see you all in a couple of weeks.

Jen (01:46:33):

Alright, bye everyone.

Seth (01:46:35):

Bye for now.