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## Curated Q&A Call #10 with Seth

Seth (00:02):

All right. Hey, everybody. Welcome. Good to see you. This is the final Q and A call for this round of SBSM. With me are my lovely team members. Mara and Susan, thank you for being here. They'll be helping out in the chat. I got, oh, 15 very different questions, for the most part, for this call, and so I'm just going to answer all 15 individually. Some are kind of entirely out of the scope of our program, but kind of interesting. So I just left them in there, since I figured, heck, why not? It's the last call.

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So we will get started. Just to note that I will, at the end of the call, if you do stick around, I'm going to do a sort of just a brief group neurosensory visualizing practice that I sometimes like to wrap up with on the last call. So if you can stick around for that, we'll be doing that at the end. Alrighty. Okay, so, "Hello. alumni here of four years, and I've had a lot of great things happen with this work, in terms of regulation and capacity. When I get touch work done, or I do some diaphragm work in the labs, for example, a lot does come up now, and it can take some time for my system to come back to homeostasis. I do have the capacity to handle it, but it can take me a week or several weeks to return to normal. I'm struggling to find a way to move into the deeper aspects of this work, even with titration.

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Any advice or tips?" You bet. So the first thing I'll say is that it actually sounds like you already are on a really good trajectory to organically just allow that to happen, because what you describe here of your slowly growing regulation and capacity, you have the capacity now to receive physical work, touch work. You can go into the diaphragms and work with what comes up, and yeah, I hear you. It's a deal. You have some stuff to process there, but then you come back after a week or so, maybe a little bit more, to feel relatively normal. So, awesome. That is really, really good. Now, the fact that it takes a week or more does tell me that you're still growing capacity, because generally speaking, when we just process a piece of trauma, say,

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usually if we are at really strong capacity, it's going to take more like a day or maybe two or three days to come back to homeostasis - a week or more, fine.

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It just tells us that the system still is gaining in resiliency and capacity to expand, and come back, and reconfigure, and do all the stuff that it does. So, really good. I mean, just keep on doing what you're doing in terms of little other things you could explore. I'm glad you mentioned titration, so please keep that in mind with any of the things I'm about to suggest, because everything I'm about to suggest can potentially ping deeper into the system, and stir up some stuff. So, one is Feldenkrais. So, the Feldenkrais practices. The neurosensory practices, mostly in labs nine and 10. The more advanced Feldenkrais practices, those can really stir up some stuff for a lot of people, because of the way in which Irene asks us to pay attention in those practices. And the movements themselves are often kind of tapping into developmental layers. So, ways in which we move when we're babies, and sort of laying on our back, exploring the environment, looking around, moving our limbs with curiosity.

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Feldenkrais taps into a lot of that stuff, or can. So, those practices, I don't have them up in front of me. Maybe I'll just do that real quick, just so I can name exactly. But it's mostly in lab nine and 10 where we find the bulk of these more advanced ones. So, for example, so, actually, starting in lab eight, even lab seven, lesson three, gentle head rolling is a little bit more of a Feldenkraisian lesson. And then lab eight, lesson one, mini balance, your back, lesson two and three, connecting the head and the pelvis. Those are both really powerful Feldenkrais lessons. And also rolling like a baby in lab nine, the bell hand lesson in lab nine is a doozy. It's deceptively simple, but if you really tune into what she's asking you to do, it promotes a very deep change in the system.

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So those are all ways to potentially dig in a little deeper into the more advanced stuff. Again, of course, with those lessons, keeping in mind your impulse, listening to your body, do you feel like you need to process something that comes up during the practice? Please do press pause, et cetera. Other ways to consider, or other things, I should say, to consider, are there ways in

which you can bring the practices more into your everyday life? So remembering that at the end of the day, all of these neurosensory practices are intended to be, eventually, just somatic tools that you have at your disposal all the time, and that you go to organically. So how might you support that? Are you remembering in the grocery store to orient? Are you feeling your feet? Are you remembering potent posture? Are you breathing? Are you holding tension in your throat? Are you holding tension in your jaw? All the ways which you can check into yourself in a day-to-day way that isn't about listening to an audio lesson. It's like, am I remembering to use these tools in real life, moment to moment? Are you listening to your impulses? These types of things.

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And then another thing you could look at, are there elements of your life that still need to be addressed? So are you happy with your work? Are there relationships that need addressing? Is there someone that you're hanging out with that you're realizing, oh man, that's, I'm really not enjoying my time with 'em. That's kind of an energy suck, but I don't know, I feel like they're dependent on me, and now I don't want to break up. Are there any weird relational dynamics that need addressing in your life? Are you happy with your work or do you want to find a different kind of work? What's your living situation? Is that supportive enough? What's your exercise? Are there ways that you can push your system that have nothing to do with trauma work, on the surface? For example, exercising more intensely, walking more, getting more out into nature. These are all ways in which you can deepen, especially when you combine moment to moment awareness with somatic qualities. You can deepen your regulation, your capacity, your resilience, and what you have access to in yourself.

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The only other thing I can think of is you can, if you want, choose, if you're not already, to start working with specific memories. So are there things, events in your life that you know are still unresolved? Because if you start to think about them, you get really activated. Or if something appears in your life that looks like something from the past, do you get flashbacks? Do you get highly activated, easily triggered? If there are specific memories and events that you know are unresolved, then you could start to work specifically with memory as a way to get deeper into

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the system. And that sometimes can be helpful with a practitioner. That's another thing you can explore for going deeper. You can also do it on your own review. If you didn't see the call on shock trauma last week, go watch that, because I talk about something called the T model, which is all about working with specific events and memories, which you can do on your own, and you can also do with someone else. So those are all different suggestions for helping you get into the deeper aspects of yourself and this work.

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Okay, "From an SBSM perspective, what is driving people to mass shootings, violent stabbings, murdering their parents? This seems to be a growing issue, in America, especially. People are moving beyond arguing and estrangement to murder. What the heck is going on in their nervous system?" So, I'm assuming this was prompted by the horrible tragedy with Rob Reiner and his wife and son. Yeah, I think there's a few levels to this answer. In a broad picture, what we're witnessing is the inevitable culmination of generations of unresolved trauma. I mean, big picture wise, that's all that's going on. Centuries of unexpressed, unfelt, unprocessed trauma, and it's not like it gets weaker with time, it snowballs, and the weight on the next generation is heavier and heavier as we go. So is the opportunity for healing and transformation and growth. The more stuff you get handled to process, the more potential treasure you have.

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Once you do so, in terms of wisdom and internal experience and emotional capacity and all these wonderful gifts that doing this work brings. If you don't do this work and you don't look at your stuff, it gets worse and worse and worse. And I think that's what we're seeing on a societal level. That being said, there are some specific things that are aggravating that. So our current culture does not exactly support regulation, and more and more we're going away from being slow, introspective, reading, taking time to think, process, settle. We are just saturated in instant gratification culture. So, it is very easy to just keep oneself at the surface level of things, go to the next, to the next, just the sheer amount of exposure to tragedy in the world. Our nervous system is not as - generally speaking - as - humanity is not evolved to process an entire world worth of events.

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Our nervous system evolved to process our local tribe, and that's still where we're at. We are not as a species ready to handle things like smartphones. We are not as a species ready to handle things like social media, and all of these things have become more and more and more confusing. And now with AI generated content, and the way that people are using that to just invent shit, it's such a confusing world, that's meaningless in a lot of ways. That doesn't really offer the human being much of anything, other than a little dopamine hit. So that is not a culture that supports people slowing down, and asking questions, and working on their trauma, and coming to regulation. So along with that snowball, we have this culture that really supports people staying in their trauma. So that doesn't work out well for the most part.

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And that's what we're seeing. There's a final piece that is interesting to consider. Environmental toxicity also can play a role. I actually just listened to this really interesting podcast. One of my favorite podcasts is called 99% Invisible. It's about design, the human built world, which may sound boring, but it's actually fascinating. And one of the most recent episodes was about a woman who, she had written a book called Murder Land, because she grew up in Seattle area in the seventies and eighties where there was this tremendous string of serial killers, and she made the connection to the incredible amount of lead and arsenic that was in the environment at the same time, due to really unregulated smelting in the area. And there was a direct correlation to the level of lead and arsenic and violent serial killer activity. And as soon as that plant got shut down, it just went off a cliff in terms of violence in the area.

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So she didn't have enough evidence to say, look, this is direct proof, but there is a strong relationship there that was shown between environmental toxicity, heavy metals specifically, and people's tendency towards volatility, irrationality, explosiveness, inability to control their rage, all of that stuff. And we do know that heavy metals have a profound impact on the brain and the endocrine system. So yeah, lots of different factors to consider in the answer to that question. Bottom line, we have to do this work as humanity. Maybe it doesn't mean humanity has to go through SmartBody SmartMind, although of course we'd be a fan of that, but we



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need to do nervous system work as a species. We have to learn about ourselves and how to navigate this world we're in, at the nervous system level, because we're not built for it, so we can thrive and succeed, and be full of vitality in life and health, but it really takes working at this level.

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So spread the word. folks. It's the thing to do. Alright. "Hi. I am an alumni. I have early developmental trauma, and reading was an important way to escape during my childhood. I still love reading, but after doing more of the healing work myself, I see how enmeshed I became with the characters in the book and their feelings. I've had to take a break from reading, because it dysregulates me so much. How can I return to my reading in a healthy way?" So very - I completely relate to this question. I was super into fantasy and science fiction from an early age, and absolutely used it in the same way. Now I'd like to consider, well, consider a slightly different perspective here. You are dysregulated, and you're engaging with the fiction and the characters therein and their emotional processes, because it's a way to have relationships and an emotional life that's safe.

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So this is actually a resource, or it has been, now what it sounds like has happened is you've done enough work that now you're seeing how you're getting caught up in those emotions and those journeys, and it's actually not the best for you, because it sounds like maybe you have more of your own emotional life, more safety in relating to yourself and other real people in your environment, and you're seeing how, wow, this really stirs me up. But I think probably for a long time, if you're any similar to me, it probably was a resource for you. I'm going to guess, and that's just a logical assumption, but I am guessing it really felt great to escape into those books as you were growing up. So I think that it's moved. It sounds like it's moved from being a resource and a way to have a safe emotional life and relationships to realizing, oh, this is actually generating emotions and internal drama that I don't really need. Okay, great. And then, yeah, that means that it is time to have a shift in how you relate to your reading. So taking a break is a great idea. While you're doing that, I would encourage you to look at - what are your real relationships?

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Is there any way that you can take more advantage of safe people and safe relationships in your life in a way that is going to serve you, you, emotionally in the same way that the books have been? Meaning how can you get more richness and interaction from real life so that you are starting to fill in what that has been for you, because it's not really doing it for you so much anymore. Another thing to consider is what if you just completely read something different? So I don't know what, you don't say what you've been reading, but I mean it sounds like you're reading probably either fiction, or maybe very rich biographies or something, because talking about how the emotions and the characters and everything are stirring up a lot for you, so it doesn't sound like you're reading textbooks. It sounds like there's some stories, some character developments and relationships happening. So what would it be like to read a book by Peter Levine or Bessel van der Kolk? *The Body Keeps The Score*, or Gabor Maté, or any books in the trauma field. There's lots of good ones. My favorites by Peter that I think everyone should read are *In an Unspoken Voice*, which is his second book, and *Trauma and Memory* is one of the lesser known ones, that is actually really, really good, and helpful to understand.

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Yeah, what would that be like? Just to read totally different stuff that isn't about characters and relationships and drama. Another thing to consider if you do return to reading at some point is to have a dedicated reading time that has a container around it. This is something that I did since I was prone to just escaping, as you were. As the years went by, my relationship with reading changed and evolved. Now I just have morning coffee time where I read 15, 20 minutes, maybe a half hour. That's it. And so there's this container around it, and I don't mind. For me now, I love really good fantasy and science fiction. I love literature as well, but yeah, really well-written fantasy or science fiction. I love that stuff, and it's no longer a problem for me. I'm not living my emotional life through the book anymore, but I still like to have a container around it.

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I know I have a tendency towards escapism. So, all different ideas. Okay, this is an interesting one. "AI is unavoidable. Let's talk about how to healthfully incorporate it into somatic work. I

was averse to AI, realized my resistance, began to explore, and found some models that were aiming to be non extractive and meta relational, and proceeded with caution. I now engage with Chat GPT-5, and have had extraordinarily helpful conversations around many issues of mind that arise from nervous system work. And the responses have been profound, insightful, and it brings me clarity and articulation.” So, believe it or not, this is not new to me. I've been hearing, I've heard from, maybe this is the fourth or fifth person, where they have used an AI model to do actual nervous system work, or get accurate feedback. That was really helpful. Now the reason for this is because there's a couple things. One, when we're talking about AI, we don't actually currently have anything that is true AI intelligence. What we have right now available to the public is basically a really big search engine combined with a large language learning model. So what it can do is filter through all the web, and it can filter that, and it can formulate a response that sounds human, compassionate, empathetic. That's the combination of those functions. So it's not actually intelligent in that it's creating its own thoughts at this point.

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If we look at it in that way, well, that's exactly the best use for it. It depends on what it's fed. If your model has learned Gabor Maté, Peter Levine, Polyvagal Theory by Stephen Porges, Bessel van der Kolk, if it's read all these books, and yeah, it can give you an accurate response. One person actually sent me a transcript of their whole interaction, and I read it, and I was like, damn. Yeah, that's more attuned and accurate than many human practitioners that I've seen, interacted with, seen, witnessed. So yes, it does have a role, potentially, we are actually currently exploring some possibilities and ways we might use it with our vast resource of input. So for example, years and years and years of Q and A calls and training calls, we've been exploring - maybe there's some ways that we can use this technology to make that database more searchable, which is something that we may be bringing into the future.

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So yeah, there are potential uses that can be good. It's not all just doom and darkness. So yeah, thanks for that observation actually. Well, so this is totally aside, but I don't know. I'm feeling compelled to share this. I had the same kind of thing with AI. I don't want anything to do with



that. I'm an organic human person here, a hippie from the woods. So I totally avoided it for a long time. And then this person, I had to sort of look at that, well, okay, it's not going away. Let's look at maybe I should explore something with it, and just see what is my actual experience? How does it feel? At the time, my band was releasing an album. So I decided to explore using it to create a music video. And it was a fascinating process. I really liked what I created in partnership with this software I was using, and it was all AI stuff.

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We're not using it, but it was an interesting process. And what I discovered in the process of that is that it felt to me, and this is going away from somatic work and a bit into spirituality, but anything, it's a vibration, it's a frequency. And it felt to me like there was a positive aspect and a negative aspect. And I actually had this really interesting experience where I was creating this video, and I changed my intention about what I was creating. I was like, oh, let's actually make the story about this. And it was a more redemptive theme. It was more in alignment with trauma work and healing and mother Earth. And the next video that got generated, or the frame after, I changed my intention, all of a sudden this female fairy appeared spontaneously in the image. So I was like, okay, there's something going on here. There's something happening where there's some death to this. There's something interesting here. So just a random thing that I thought was fascinating.

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"I have chronic neck and back pain that really affects my life. I've noticed how often I tense my back or shoulders, in part due to dysfunctional movement patterns, but I don't know how to stop doing this. I've been working with a postural therapist for a while, but I'm wondering if I'm struggling to make changes due to a nervous system component. Is there anything you could recommend to help me with this?" So yeah, when we have a chronic tension pattern, so this isn't just a sore muscle from a workout or something, these are areas where they're always tense for as long as we can remember. Sometimes that is directly related to the nervous system, almost always. Now, yes, that's cool. You're looking at postural stuff. It also is related to that, but our posture is also related to our nervous system state. How we carry ourselves is directly related to how we feel about ourselves and what we're holding inside in terms of

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unresolved trauma, specifically with tension, almost always what is related from a nervous system lens is the old incomplete procedural memory, or incomplete self-protective responses.

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Also bracing patterns, or habitual unconscious forms of self-protection. So it could be that your house was really scary, and your shoulders and your back were always up. You were just waiting to be screamed at, or you were waiting to be attacked in some way. It could be that this is from a specific trauma, where your shoulders and arms really needed to do something to protect yourself, but you couldn't. And so that action is still wanting to happen. So the way to investigate this from a somatic lens is to allow the tension. When you notice the tension, don't try to soften it, actually allow it, notice it, welcome it, and see if you can discover what it is trying to do. So for example, say your shoulder is always like this. It has a tendency just to creep up, and you have to constantly stop that, okay, I'm going to catch it.

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And instead of letting go, I'm just going to let it be there. And what happens if I actually, if I increase it, is there a trajectory? Oh, I'm moving like this. Okay, and I'm going to come back a little bit. Titration, right? Explore reversibility. These are Feldenkraisian principles, also. Okay? Okay, that's something. Okay, let it go orient a little bit. Okay, now what if I come back? What if I come back to it? Yeah, okay, it's still there. Oh, I see. If I keep following it up, my elbow starts to lift, oh, my arm, and now my head wants to turn, right? So this is all the stuff that you discover by really tuning into your impulses, where we talk about following your impulse, and we start - about just the basics. Biological impulses, pee when you need to pee, drink water when you're thirsty, et cetera.

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The more you honor your impulses, the more refined they can communicate to you. So you start to really be able to hear things like, oh, as I follow this tension, there is an impulse to turn. And then you follow that. And then again, maybe you bring it back, you let it go, you go back to it. This is how we explore chronic tension patterns in this work. We try to discover, if we allow it to happen, is it trying to do something? So if that's the case, we're talking about incomplete procedural memory, incomplete self-protective response. The body tried to do something but

it couldn't, and it's still trying to do that thing. That almost always results in chronic tension. The other thing is bracing patterns. Those sometimes have less information about what they're trying to do, because it's just kind of armoring up. You're not necessarily trying to push away, you're just tightening up, armoring up.

(29:23)

But generally speaking, if it's a bracing pattern, and we start to feel into it, there's usually a lot of emotion there. There's usually a lot of some kind of high intensity emotion. So you can explore that with breath, with bringing in expansion into the area that's tense. You can explore it via intention and attention, just feeling, holding space. And you could also explore it with various forms of manual work, which you could also do, yourself rolling on a ball, rolling on a fascial roller. Various ways that you can start to explore getting some physical pressure into there, if you don't want to go to a practitioner, necessarily. So those are all different things to explore. Sometimes it may be useful to do some one-on-one work with a good somatic practitioner. If it does feel like, yeah, something wants to happen, but I can't quite figure it out, that's one of the things that we're trained to spot, and say, Hey, have you noticed what your arm is doing there?

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Or, that's part of what our skillset is to see, oh, I can see that you're trying to do this, and so that may be useful as well. And finally, there can sometimes be some usefulness later on with Feldenkrais. Again, just learning different movement patterns, learning how you do what you do, which is really what Feldenkrais is about, discovering what you do, and how you do it. And then other options, different ways that are more efficient, that are more healthy. So, that's another thing to explore. But there's no use exploring Feldenkrais, generally, until the incomplete procedural memory, bracing, patterns, et cetera, have been resolved. This is why Irene went into the trauma work she was doing. Feldenkrais is great with some people, but other people, nothing changed, or something would change, great, in the session. And then next week it was exactly the same, because Feldenkrais, and rewiring, generally, is too subtle and refined to get in there and resolve these tension patterns, if it's about trauma, and the body needing to survive in some way.

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“Can you please explain more about eye of the needle therapy, that was mentioned on one of the previous calls? I was sexually abused as a three-year-old, and dissociated from the event until adulthood. The experience of having two different worlds that are contrasting keeps repeating to me. I wonder how to connect my life to be more whole, and to discern the safety in a more coherent way, not to over expect it, and on the other hand, to be hypervigilant.”

Yeah, so it sounds like there's now awareness of two different selves perceiving the world, your adult self, and then your little three-year-old self who is just coming back online. And of course the three-year-old self is going to be very distrustful, hypervigilant, and the other adult self may be in reaction to that. It may be overtrusting sometimes, actually, or overeager for attachment or connection. There's lots of ways it can show up, but it sounds like you're having two different experiences based off of the way in which you separated from yourself as a young person.

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And I actually wouldn't recommend the eye of the needle work for this, at least right now. I will tell you - I will talk about it, but I think it may be more useful at this point to really build a somatic connection with that three-year-old. So, holding space and intending that self to be present is sometimes just enough, even just while orienting, inviting the three-year-old to look out your eyes. What's it like for her, feeling? Where is she in your body? Touching, holding, connecting, sending good intentions, working with the kidney adrenal system, those early threat responses that would've happened. Building regulation, building capacity, building a relationship with that really young self, would be best to do, I think, right now. So that being said, what I have the eye of the needle work for is reclaiming parts of ourselves that are stuck in a dissociative state. I understand why you're asking, because that could apply more often.

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This is used for surgical trauma, when someone was literally anesthetized out of their body, and while something was happening to their body that was very distressing, even if it was lifesaving and crucial. So it's usually used for surgical trauma, or for an attack where maybe you were knocked unconscious and assaulted. Generally how I've seen it used, I could see, though,

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how it could potentially be used in the situation you described. Essentially what it is is Peter's adaptation of a shamanic journey, essentially, while the practitioner acts as a tether. So in a session, if a practitioner is doing this work, there is a way we hold the calves usually, of the legs, and we start doing this squeezing rhythm that is in rhythm with the client's breath, and there's a certain way to squeeze with the breath such that it encourages them to go in or out as it may be into the etheric realms, where that dissociated piece is hanging out.

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And then at a certain point, we will change the squeezing rhythm to be, instead of the inhale, it's with the exhale. And this then can encourage the person to come back. And it's not always one or the other. It kind of depends. You sort of follow your intuition on which is right for each person. So it's not like, don't take that as a rule, but it is some kind of squeezing with the breath in or out in coordination that helps them do that journey. And the squeezing and the presence of the somatic practitioner is a tether to keep them grounded partially here. And now while they go and discover the parts of themselves that are still hanging out in the etheric realms. So it's something that would be very tough to do on one's own, because it's about having that tether. The only way that you could potentially explore this on your own, although I don't recommend doing it now, I think before you do any kind of this more shamanic work, you want to really, like I said, focus on working in the body, and seeing if you can build relationship with the perceptions of that early self, the emotions of that early self, because it's possible you don't actually need this work, and it could be overstimulating, but if one were to try this kind of shamanic work, you need a tether.

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And so one thing that is traditionally used in the shamanic realms is the drum. So you can get a shamanic drumming recording. There's lots on YouTube, and you would use that as your tether. And there's a series of signals that are used. The shamanic drumming, while journeying, is typically a very, very fast drumbeat, usually for about 20, 30 minutes, and then it usually ends with four very much slower, loud notes to call you back. There's different ways, but that's kind of a standard one. So that is something you could try, if you were so inclined. But again, I



recommend working in the body first, to really build a relationship with that young physiology and self.

(38:01)

“Hello, my question regards hoarding. There is an intergenerational trauma, where my nan grew up in poverty, without a mother, and an alcoholic father. Once married, she was out of poverty, and would bulk buy everything and hardly throw any containers away, in case we might need them. This survival energy was passed down to my mom and me, I'm aware, but still feel guilty over throwing containers away. I'm doing something wrong.” So yeah, this is a classic intergenerational inheritance pattern that's been passed down to you. So with these things, it sounds like there's a surface presentation, which is the guilt. I feel a little guilty throwing this away, and that's way up here on the surface. So if you want, if it's useful and you need to work on this, then you want to find what's deeper in the waters there. And what that's going to be is terror.

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Survival terror is what's at the root of this. So it's not just a guilt thing. It's like, oh my God, I have to keep everything or I'll die. It is not going to be logical in any way, the root of this. And there's no way to know whether or not you actually have that within you or not. You may get a little, as I answer, as you hear this answer, does something stir in you? That's maybe a little bit of information as to whether this is there or not, because it could just be a behavioral pattern, and a surface level thing for you. And all you have to do is just, okay, yep, there's that guilt, and yep, that's just my grandma. I don't need that. A cognitive approach could potentially work for this. However, if you did really inherit, and there is an unresolved thing in there, it's going to be survival terror.

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And so that's what you want to kind of sniff around and look for in your system. And the way you can do that is really when the next time this guilt surfaces, pause, and just really sit with it, treat the act of throwing that container away as a neurosensory practice. As that guilt comes, what do you actually feel? Is it just in your mind like, oh, I shouldn't be doing this, or is there a

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visceral thing going on? And if there's a visceral thing going on, then you follow that and see what you find. And yeah, at the end of the day, this is about survival terror.

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And just as an added note, this is kind of total surface level, but you said throwing away containers, there's guilt. I mean, you can't recycle 'em. I don't know if that's what you mean, but if you're just throwing away, and there's an option to recycle, then you could try that. That's a total surface level answer, but it could be a component that might be useful. I don't know.

“Hello, this is my second round, and I have early developmental trauma and ME/CFS,” this is chronic fatigue syndrome. “Is it possible to work with healthy aggression if I can't really feel the connected emotions and sensations now? And then I have a lot of angry thoughts, but when I stop the thoughts and try to feel the emotions, I normally don't feel anything. This also applies to other emotions, unless they're very strong.” So, with early developmental trauma and the fact that you have chronic fatigue, this points to, yes, your system got very early on, and you're still building up the capacity within you to have full range of access to all your emotions, which is totally normal.

(41:44)

It's actually not a bad thing right now that you can't fully feel all the emotions and sensations of your anger. That's your body protecting you. Because if you still have chronic fatigue, that means you don't have a ton of capacity yet. So that's not a bad thing. Your system's trying to protect you from that high voltage, because really feeling aggression and rage is a high voltage state. It's a lot of electricity movement through the system. And if your wiring isn't yet robust enough to really handle it, you don't really want to feel all of that yet. It's a good thing that you're not. So you can, however, start to build those pathways, build those capacities, and what you can do is you just work with the surface level, you work with the affect and the musculature. And don't worry about whether you really feel it or not.

(42:37)

It doesn't really matter so much right now. I think when you notice that you're angry, you're

having angry thoughts, then just what does it feel like just to squeeze your fists a bit, and maybe you press with your feet a few times, and then you just let it go. What happens? Do you feel a little heat? Great. Okay, awesome. Leave it. Maybe you feel nothing. No worries. Leave it. That's fine. Or maybe you notice you're having angry thoughts, and you just let your lip raise a bit, and you narrow your eyes, and then ah, you let it go. And what was that like? You just start exploring with the expression, the facial expressions of anger, and the musculature that's associated with anger, which is about self-protection, ultimately. So our fists, our arms, our teeth, our jaw, our legs as well. Feel what it's like to use those muscle groups, to squeeze a little bit, to mobilize a little bit, and then let it go. Just little bits like that can help your system start to see, like, oh, we're working together here. There's anger present. And it's not just staying in the thoughts, okay, there's bits of the body associated with anger are starting to be mobilized. Cool. That's probably the best way right now. Alright, let's have a little pause. Go get some water, or have a pee break, or whatever. If you need to walk around, go away from the screen, whatever. We'll be back in a few minutes.

(48:30)

Alrighty, welcome back. "Self-blame and trauma. Lately, a strong word of self-blame appeared, that I seem to need to be working on. Can you say some words with your own, or professional experience on this, and which emotions it relates to, as it does not seem to be too much of a body emotion, bodily emotion, but more of a concept." Okay, well, I don't know what the word is, so I can't say for sure, but it sounds like it. It's something along the lines of, I suck, in some way, if it's self blame. So there's two possibilities here. One, maybe it is the mental representation of something that is very much in the body, and deep, so deep that you're not feeling it, but it's been allowed to surface up into your mind. And that is often how it may go when a certain state, especially something like what's at the root of this, which is toxic shame, is so painful to feel, the body will repress it, the mind will repress it.

(49:48)

And then as we start to do some work, maybe we start to get some information about what we're holding in the form of thoughts, words appearing in our heads, et cetera. But those are just the surface fish, and there's a much bigger whale, down deep. So that's one possibility, for

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sure. If that's the case, then what you're talking about is toxic shame. Any form of 'I suck' is toxic shame. So that is what it would be if it is in fact a deeper thing. And we've talked tons on these calls about how to work with that. I'll refer you to the YouTube video, discussing the gateway emotion for processing toxic shame. Essentially the body doesn't feel good holding toxic shame. It feels gross. Another podcast I listened to, someone had had a really good explanation, or just I liked the way they phrased it as a total contraction of the self, where just your entire self just is contracted into a pit, and you kind of want to disappear from the world.

(50:59)

That's toxic shame, and it feels gross at a visceral level. It's like, eh. And that is how we generally work with it. Once we can start to find it, if it's in there, it's going to be somewhere in the area of the viscera. In the collapse across the shoulders, the tailbone will be tucked. There's a whole posture of toxic shame that will likely be accessible, if that's something that is ready to move through your system, over time. So that's what you would be looking for. One way to explore this intentionally is you hear the word and you tune your attention to your body. What happens if you just intentionally tuck your tailbone and drop your shoulders a bit? Do you start to get some feeling that stirs in there or no, maybe not. And also just have patience. If it's ready, it'll arise on its own over time.

(52:01)

You can, with your intention and attention, hold space for it in these ways. The other possibility is that this is just a mental echo of something that has actually been resolved, which also can happen. We can work through a lot of stuff. And at the nervous system, emotional, bodily, physical level, it's been cleared, but the mind still has associated patterns of thought that can pop up, and you can sort of tell if it's one or the other based on have you done that deep toxic shame processing? And if you have, then this is most likely just an echo, or maybe there's a little bit more to do. Or my sense is, and this is probably a little bit more likely, is, it's actually unresolved, still this deep toxic shame charge in the body, and you just need to hold space for it, hold your intention, your attention, and invite it to surface, which it will do when it's ready. If that's the case.

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(53:13)

“I began struggling with insomnia 10 years ago. SBSM improved my sleep, but since moving a month ago, it has worsened, noises from neighbors trigger hypervigilance, even with earplugs, as the challenge is internal, orienting, containment, adrenal dropping exercises, all help. But I still struggle to feel safe within myself. Do you have suggestions for restoring a sense of safety and improving sleep?” So I mean, you're already doing the things I would suggest, also, please know that this is totally normal. Anytime you move to a new living situation, it can take a while for the system to adjust. And there's so many things, the sense, the sounds of the environment, the light patterns. When you're in a new place, there's all a new set of stimuli, and your body has to, it takes time to normalize these things and realize, oh, this novelty is not a threat. Because if we think back to the biology of stress videos, for all mammals, novelty is the thing that produces an orienting response.

(54:21)

The initial assessment of - is this dangerous? If we have a predisposition towards hypervigilance because of unresolved trauma, and we've maybe worked through it quite a bit, and then we move that natural tendency to orient towards novelty, it can poke at our system, and put us back into a little bit more hypervigilance than we're used to. Again, it's just normal. It just can take some time. Even without trauma. Being in a new environment can sometimes take time. So just give yourself some time to adapt and that will - time and familiarity will almost certainly help a lot. You're already doing the downregulating practices that I would suggest to work with your system, to help it feel safer. Awesome. Be sure to do those also when you're not feeling scared, for just as proactive practices during the day. The only other possibility that I can think of that may be useful here is that maybe there is something that's ready to move through your system here.

(55:28)

It's not just only the environment and old predispositions towards hypervigilance. Maybe this move has opened up or unpacked a deeper layer of sympathetic activation, and it just needs to be processed. And if that's the case, of course, remember the two fundamental tenants of this work. Do we move towards settling, resourcing, orienting, containing, downregulation, or do



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we go with the activation into more activation? Of course, how we actually resolve the big sympathetic charges is by allowing them to get to their peak intensity. But again, you've got to build the capacity for that. So that's why we do the other thing. We learn to feel the activation, and then we learn to bring ourselves out of it. Oh, yay, I can venture into this scary neighborhood, and then I can find my way back to safety. And we do that again and again and eventually, really be - realize, you know what?

(56:27)

I can stay present in the dangerous neighborhood because I have enough tools, and self-awareness, and somatic knowledge, and emotional capacity that I can just feel this tremendous threat, and feel like I'm going to die. And at the same time, I know I'm okay, and I'm feeling my butt on the chair, and I'm breathing, and at the same time I'm feeling survival terror. And that's how it processes through. That's how it actually gets out of the system. So we sometimes need to work with the activation instead of only, of course, your own judgment call, if there is something to do there in that way, it means when you're trying to sleep and you can't, and you're feeling the hypervigilance, you actually get up, you get out of bed, you work with it. I don't remember why, the other night, I don't remember what was going on, but something had happened for some whatever reason, I just couldn't sleep.

(57:23)

It wasn't like a deep trauma thing, but my system was in, it was just going. It was in sympathetic. I think it had been a really overstimulating day, and laying there trying to sleep was not working. So what do I do? I get up, I do 10 squats, 10 pushups. I used my sympathetic juice, and then I went right to sleep. No problem. So we have to sometimes engage with that sympathetic system to help it do what it's wanting to do, and then we can come down. And of course, in the context of trauma, that may also mean emotional processing as well.

(58:15)

My partner and I have chosen to be child free. We are traveling, and we want to make a positive impact on children in their homes, especially newborns and toddlers. How to connect with them in person, and at the same time, feel confident they won't be dependent on us, if we stay at one place for just a few months." So I think I get what you're saying here. You're

traveling, you don't have your own kids. It sounds like you probably have a fair degree of regulation and capacity, and you are looking to connect and be positive sources for kids. That's great. Don't worry about it, essentially is the answer. Even if you're staying in someplace for a month, a positive regulating influence is better than no positive regulating influence, and you're not their parent. Their primary attachment is with their parents. Even if you are really fun person, that's great to have around for a while, and oh, auntie so-and-so, Irene was like this for some, Auntie Irene, for some kids of some friends we have, and she would go, and those parents are totally dysregulated and the kids would glom onto her while she was there, and then she would leave, and yeah, maybe they'd be a little sad, and then they go onto the next thing.

(59:36)

Because if you're a visiting person, you're just not a primary attachment person. So great, go and spread your regulation, and don't worry about it. They're going to be fine. And the fact that you can bring them some regulation and some sense of presence and listening and attunement, all that stuff will only be a positive.

(59:56)

"I was walking into a building the other day and startled somebody. I felt extremely annoyed and angry afterwards. I went to the bathroom and felt bad. Should I have helped her come down, or done more? Is it my energy that was startling? Am I intimidating? All of these thoughts and regrets? I feel a lot of pressure to be of help and be kind in the world, and it feels like a lot of pressure, when sometimes I just want to be in my own stuff and not always be the helper. What is happening?" What indeed is happening? So much is going on in this question. So I walked into the building and startled someone. I felt extremely annoyed and angry. So you startled someone, they got scared. Your first response was to feel angry and annoyed. No judgment, totally get it. And then you went into collapse.

(01:01:01)

Oh, now I'm sad. I should have helped them. Okay, what's going on here? Their startle response is, again, that startle. That's the initial stage of sympathetic activation. So they got startled, they went into sympathetic activation. You immediately went into sympathetic

activation. It sounds like probably what's going on here is at some point you learned that you have to take care of everybody before yourself, because immediately you're pissed off. Oh my gosh, I just startled them. Now I have to fucking take care of them and help them come down. And then I didn't do that. Now I feel bad. I didn't do that. I didn't take care of them. I'm supposed to. So who told you, at some point, you've got to take care of everybody before yourself. What's going on here? So where did that come from? I think the thing you want to discover for yourself, maybe you already know, but at some point you learned, I have to take care of everybody and my needs are not important.

(01:02:06)

Like you say, I feel a lot of pressure to be of help, to be kind, like, great. Yeah. I mean, we want to be of help and be kind, but if you feel tremendous pressure to help, it's like, yeah, that is a deep, deep imprint there that says other people's needs are more important than your own. So yeah, I just want to be in my own stuff. Yeah, you should be. I totally support that. I think that would be fantastic for you to learn to be self-centered, because you clearly have the wiring to help. Don't worry about that. How can you stay focused on your own experience in this situation? What might that have looked like? It might have looked like - you feeling your activation. Okay. And you say to them, oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to startle you. And you just move on.

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You don't have to take care of them. They're in their own stuff. You don't know them. It might be intrusive to try to take care of them, right? They don't know you. That might feel scary for them. Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to startle you, have a good day. I'm sorry about that. And you just move on. And then you work with what's coming up for yourself. So you ask, what's happening? I'm pretty sure that's what's happening. I hope that that's helpful and provides a little bit of insight. And then it's like, yeah, give yourself permission to focus on yourself, please. You absolutely are worthy of that and deserve that.

(01:03:41)

Okay, two questions from the same person here, that are quite linked. "I first awakened sexual energy that was stagnating somewhere in my pelvis, leading to frustration, and then followed

by collapse and giving up. Is this a suppressed life force that has no way to move? Should I work with the anger work, or annihilation work? It feels connected to my throat also, and somehow it feels more like a block to experiencing pleasure. Can that be?" Question two. "Recently I felt attracted to a guy, and as the connection became available, feelings of disgust, to the point I would cringe, and sacrifice my boundaries to just reach the connection. How to work on this? It's like my nervous system lit up so much with this hope of receiving love. It's the first time I actually managed to see that and stay with that. Is that the taste of codependency?"

(01:04:40)

Okay, so these are actually kind of the same question, I think ultimately. So yeah, it sounds like there is a block to you feeling and accessing your life energy, and that is because at some point you learned most likely that I must suppress my authenticity in order to have the attachment, if this is the classic young person survival dilemma, when we're in a home where we're not supported in being authentic and being in touch with ourselves. So this is that classic Gabor Maté video, in the additional resources. If you haven't watched that, definitely go watch that. The need for authenticity, super, super important. But essentially, as young people, we have two primary drives, the need for connection, attachment, safe attachment, and the need for authenticity. They're both survival needs, but attachment will pretty much always trump authenticity, because it's a little bit more important from the survival spectrum.

(01:05:53)

So what we do is we learn, I have to suppress my life force. I have to suppress my authenticity in order to maintain the connection. And yes, that is what leads to codependency, and all sorts of other relational issues. So yeah, your impulse or instinct, I think in this first question is right, you sense some of your life energy. It was expressing as a sexual energy, but that's just life energy that's mobilizing in the lower body, and that's your life force. And you felt it stirring, and then it felt like it got stuck, and then collapsed, because yeah, your system learned a pattern of repressing that, and it has nothing to do with sex. It has to do with authenticity in a relationship. So this is something that I think, to really solidify the kernel of what's going on, I have learned to sacrifice my authenticity for the sake of connection.

(01:06:55)

So yeah, your nervous system lit up with the hope of receiving love from this new person. And at the same time you're feeling the disgust that you already know you're going to sacrifice your boundaries in order to have that connection. That's a learned pattern that got learned very, very early on, most likely. So not the best time to actively be in romantic relationships when you're working through these things, but if that is something that's developing, hopefully it is with full communication and transparency that you're doing this work, because this stuff has got to be part of the conversation. Probably simpler to not have romantic relationships as you're working through these layers specifically. But what you want to do is when you feel these impulses like, oh my gosh, look at that shiny thing that I really want. Look at this potential love that I can get you.

(01:07:53)

Don't act from that place. Don't act from that place. Instead, notice what you're feeling, and see what's happening in the body. And maybe do things like, yeah, support your potency, support your authenticity in some way. How do I really feel right now is what needs to be asked, as you're experiencing some kind of connection, because this pattern is so deep that like, oh my gosh, there's love. I'm going to immediately throw all this stuff away. And I'm just like, no, pause. Feel that. How do you feel that in the body? What's happening? Connect to yourself. Support your authenticity yourself. Maybe do a little bit of potent posture. Feel what it's like. Can you hold a potent posture while feeling these things that might lead to aggression? Great, work with it. Speak your truth by yourself. Speak out loud what you're feeling, or to a mirror to yourself. Support your inner truth, your authenticity, your reality, and really work on that for a while, and so that you can maintain that even in casual interactions. This may show up in little ways, just in people where there's no stakes, when you're going through the checkout line, can you maintain a sense of potency in yourself, and yeah, you're not trying to shape yourself in any way. You're just being you. You're just feeling yourself.

(01:09:31)

Yeah. Okay, last one. "I had a wave of sadness and grief come up this morning. I cried because I haven't been able to do much, and that was good. Sadness and grief are in my throat,



tightness, heat when I cry, and my head seems to fill up with tension, not feeling much below the neck, how to work with the throat and head area. Thank you.” Okay, so, grief is what we're talking about. And grief, when there's no blocks in the body is, believe it or not, an expansive experience. It's because grief is so powerful. It's an emotional charge that it wells up through the body. It's like a wave, and you've got to just surrender to it. But we don't, unfortunately, get taught that. We are usually taught to manage and pack up our grief, and the body is the thing that has to do that.

(01:10:29)

So that's why you're feeling that constriction is you're encountering the constriction patterns that are habitually used to manage grief. Because grief, when it fully moves through, it's not like it - good is too simple of a word, but it feels powerful and life-giving. You move through it and it's like, wow, there can be a sense of lightness and clarity, of having moved this big charge through the system. That means that you need to work with those somatic blocks. You can work directly with your head, you can work with that in the same way you do diaphragm work. If you revisit the diaphragm lessons, you'll see there are three in the head as well. And you can work with those in the same way as you do with the bodily diaphragms. My hunch is that may be useful, but I think you also need to work with a respiratory diaphragm, because you say you're feeling all this stuff in your head, which are, yeah, classic representations of grief and countering constriction, the tightness in the throat, the heat, the tightness in the head, throbbing, all of that is a classic representation of this.

(01:11:40)

So yeah, you can work there, but also you say you're not feeling anything below the neck. And my hunch is that there might be a lot of stuckness in here, in the respiratory diaphragm when we really feel grief we need to sob. And when we sob, the respiratory diaphragm is what has to move. There's a 'ha ha', that is the diaphragm moving. And so my hunch is that's not happening. And that getting the diaphragm moving will actually be supportive in allowing the other structures to open as well. So I would support you in, yeah, encourage you in working in both of those areas, the head and also the respiratory diaphragm. And notice, do you have habitual patterns of tightening in the throat, in the jaw? Can you focus on softening those,

bringing in some space, all that kind of stuff. Alrighty. So just one little note here before we move on. Next round, we'll be starting in early March, so that's when we will be back in a live session, doing all this stuff again. So hope to see you then, and we will end with a little practice. So this is something I may have forgotten to do last time, but yeah, I usually like to do this on the last Q and A call. So feel free to go away from the screen, or look away, or close your eyes. This is a visualization practice, so whatever supports you in doing that is great.

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So just start with the basics. Just feel your seat, feel your feet, feel your breath. And as you breathe, just notice the heart space. Is there any sense of expansion and contraction? Can you feel the rhythm of the breath as it moves through?

(01:14:26)

And as you feel the heart, and you feel the breath, just going to focus for a little bit on people and energies, things that we're grateful for. So any person in your life who has been kind to you, who has offered connection and safety, who's offered wisdom, even historical figures who inspired you, healers, sages, poets, musicians, and start to now visualize yourself as a point of light. It's like you're looking at yourself from above, and there's just this beautiful glowing light that you are. There's this orb, and all those people, all those helpful, friendly people, they are popping up around you as little points of light themselves, and they're connected to you by lines, lines of light.

(01:15:50)

And there you are. There you are just a floating point of light, and you're surrounded by points of light that are connected to you. And just sit with that for a moment, and breathe, as your breath comes in, maybe that bright, that light gets a little brighter. Maybe it pulses with your breath, and is alive. Notice, are you still feeling your butt? Still feeling your feet? See if you can feel your body, and see this at the same time. And you're held. It's like you're held in this net of light of these connections. And now it's like you're now going to be given the ability to zoom out. And you notice that not only is it you, all of your fellow SBSMRs are also there, and each of them is a point of light surrounded by points of light all around the globe.

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All of your friends and fellow students here, all surrounded by their own helpful, friendly people. And you start to see that all of you are connected as well. All of their resources, all of their connection, all of their helpers, are also connected to you, and yours to them. And it's a safety net. It's a net of light. It holds all of us in connection and regulation, shared intention. And just take another breath, and thank the light, thank your helpers, your friendly, resourcing people, sources of inspiration. And whenever you feel right, just let that close. Again, just feel yourself, feel your body connection to the environment. And as you go forward, just know that you're held, you are held in this. It's a very powerful thing, this intention of restoring regulation, of releasing survival, energy, healing, trauma, a very powerful thing. So, anybody who shares this intention is your sister, is your brother. So, go forward with that support, and we will see you in the new year. So, thank you all, and I'll see you next time. Okay.