
Training Call #2: Building Capacity + Somatic “First Aid”

Irene:

Hey, everyone. Welcome. It is the 24th of March. Time is just zooming by. I often joke, it's going to be the next year before we know it. We are on training call number two. I'll name it. It's all about building capacity, and what I call somatic first aid. And last week we were working on the very famous swimming pool and beachball analogy to describe growing capacity and the stressors in our physiology. So if you were here for that, or if you were able to attend or watch the recording, thanks for doing that. What you're going to find as we go through these training calls is they really are important elements of theory and bringing things together. The biology of stress videos, I've got this at the very top of page one here on the handout, are equally important. And just like this training call, if you're here live, if you need to pause, take a step back, turn off the volume, come back to the recording.

That's totally fair game. But it's the same with the biology of stress videos.

The ones that you're moving through this week, we're getting into number four, number five. And this is where we start talking a bit more about early trauma, how we were wired from the beginning. And this stuff can bubble up some stuff. Has anybody had some stuff bubble up as yet? Yeah? Yeah, just acknowledge it. And for those of you who've been around for a little bit, you might notice that your capacity, and how you sense this stuff, is shifting also. What used to be maybe even, kind of, it didn't make sense, or didn't even be felt, you're starting to feel it more. And that's what we want. In order to move these, I'm going to use the analogy from last week, these balls out of our swimming pool. If our vessel, if our capacity is so rigid or collapsed, we're not going to be able to move this stuff out.

We need to feel a little ping in our heart, or a tenseness in our gut, or whatever it might be. But of course the key is that we need to learn and keep building the capacity. And that's what the neurosensory exercises are for, so that we can, I like to often say, ride the tsunami wave. Now,

of course, we would never surf a tsunami wave. That's an impossibility. I'm sure there's some AI video out there where someone's riding a tsunami wave. But you don't just ... If there's anybody that surfs here, I tried once, I was horrible at it. It's tough, but you don't learn how to surf until you know how to swim.

And before you surf, you need to be able to push up on that board. And all these steps need to come in place. And then you might be a really good surfer in one area of the world, and you go into an ocean that you're not used to. And it's like you have to relearn it again. But those skills are still there. And so the skills that you're learning in these first few weeks are so that you can sense and bring up and feel when things come up, whatever might come at you. And as you go through more and more, you become like that pro surfer for no matter what you're on. But sometimes you get a little bit bigger of a wave. And even those of us who are very experienced, myself included, will go, "Whoa, what was that?" We're not immune to feeling intensity.

If anything, it's good. And that's where you go back to the basics.

If you know the swimming thing, you don't fight the wave. If you know how to swim, floating is an option. Eventually, your system will come up, and it's knowing how to, "Oh, I have to keep breathing. I have to stay calm." You don't want to panic. And then it's that ability to go, "Okay, I can surf this wave. My board is gone, but I'm just going to come into shore, and find the sand, and I'm going to be a little winded, but I'll be okay." So this is part of our journey right now, is learning how to, for some of us, even think about the water is enough. Yeah? Yeah, that's okay. Maybe looking at a picture of the ocean, and the waves is that first step. Of course, this is metaphorical. So use, of course, the moderation tools in the threads, if you've got questions about the lessons.

Definitely make use. I've heard that our little AI private tool, SOMA, it, she, he, I don't know what to call it. It's pretty smart. It pops up tons of really good information from past calls. So if you're wondering about something, just ask it a question and it'll pop up many different

options from years past of training calls and Q&A calls. All right, let's get into this. As I mentioned, the importance of the biology of stress videos. So, education is key. That's the first word there, key.

Yeah. And I'll finish that thought. Someone said, "Where is the SOMA AI tool?" It's on the ... I don't know. I think when you're on mobile, it's a bit different. Someone can correct me here, but when you're on a desktop, it's like this little floaty thing that lives at the bottom. And don't worry about it right now. You don't need to use it right now, but it's there, but you can also access it through the general question thread. And it says, I think, ask our assistant SOMA. Yeah, it's right there on the site. Yeah. Thanks to our tech guy who spent two months building that one. It didn't work right at the beginning. We had to fix it, and work with it, and all those things. All right. So, education is key.

Just for fun, I haven't done this yet. Repeat after me. I know this sounds strange. Education is key. If you've been alone this morning, you haven't talked to anybody, talk to your computer screen. Education is key. The reason it's key, education is key. It's like, yeah, of course, Irene. That's why we're here. I'm joking with this, but it's really important. What I have noticed in the last six or seven years as so much has gotten popular with the nervous system, I wouldn't have said this on a training call seven years ago, but the education that has been pumped out in the, I call it the popular press. Those of us know what that means, who are older. That's like the newspaper and the news. Now the popular press is social media for many of us. And a lot of what's being put out is not all accurate information, or it is half baked, meaning it doesn't give you the full picture.

And that's actually created a lot of confusion about what we're supposed to do when we're learning how to regulate our nervous system, when we're working on healing trauma. And so understanding the level of education that you're going to get throughout SBSM is so important, because there is no one line of this - is exactly what's going to happen to your system, or with your system, when you experience this lesson or that lesson, or you do this Feldenkrais lesson. We're all unique. Even those of us who have a family system, we're different maybe from our

siblings, from our parents. We're not like the pack of wolves in the wild who are very similar. And so this poses an interesting conundrum for us humans when we're healing. We can't follow what another person does to the T. And when we have the education on board, it allows us to use this higher brain of ours, say hello, higher brain, to choose, to use our free will, to pause, to step away.

So education is really, really important. Next line. So again, I'm on the handout, everyone. Page one for training call number two. So we want to continue to create exit paths and expand space in our nervous system and our body system. This again is in reference to last week's swimming pool beachball analogy. The first line there, we want to grow the pool, make it really big, grow the pool. And that's the body capacity. And I covered all the ways that we might do this, of course, that's not all the ways from last week, but the process of just learning is growing our capacity, right? Just the process of learning is growing our capacity.

Someone I know was supposed to get on a flight today in Toronto, and everything was crazy at the airport, because of an unfortunate crash that happened yesterday, I think it was, or the day before. And of course, she's trained, she's experienced, she's a colleague, and everyone was shouting and being mean and mad at the service people, the Air Canada service people. And of course, they're not responsible for what happened yesterday, and they're not responsible for the delays in flight and the cancels. And my colleague just was a human, and kept her capacity, and didn't engage with the stress around her. And she and the person at the desk had a nice little exchange. I think she even said she, my colleague, teared up a little bit, because she could feel how stressed this human was. So that's a good example, stressful as it is of choosing to just be kind and go, "Wow, this person has gone through a lot in the last 24 hours." I think she was at the desk when the accident happened.

So you can plan and plan for an emergency, and wait, but you're in it. It's not always the same as the scenarios you play out in your mind. So the learning we do here is so important. But then of course, when you're in that next traumatic thing that might happen, that next big feeling you might have, you come across someone who's been a little bit of a jerk, or isn't

hearing you. This, again, hello to the higher brain. This higher brain is what we have to tap into, to go, "Okay, let's feel my feet. Let's sense where I am and how can I shift my physiology, even the tiniest bit, and keep my pool flowing so that what comes out of me is not more stress." I hope that makes sense. One could say that's just good regulation as an adult 101, right? Not adding to the reactivity and to the stress of what's happening, but we can grow our pool to go back to this line, by, in the moment, and this is why this is called somatic first aid today, it's not so much about what happened in the past and bringing stuff out, or even what happened a minute ago.

It's what is happening in the moment. And that's the one thing we actually can control. We can't control what happened in the past and we cannot control necessarily what happens in the future. Of course, intention, and I think prayer is powerful, and yet the moment is what we can control. Next line down. Take out the balls, take them out. That's the next word. Take out the balls. Don't let the acute stress stick. We want to release the old stored procedural memories.

Procedural memories is the word. Now, this is a term you will learn in biology of stress video number five, where I talk about the different kinds of memories that humans have. You'll learn about implicit, and explicit, and procedural, and declarative, all those fun terms. These are memories that aren't always thought memories, like, "Oh, I remember the day that that accident happened. It was icy on the road, and that's why my brakes didn't work." Or, "I remember the day that I came out of university and I graduated, and it was sunny, and it was springtime, and I remember the smell, and it was a good feeling." Memories aren't all negative. They aren't all traumatic. They can be positive. And that's one way to enter into the system, to go, "Oh yeah, that, I remember that. " But then there's some memories that you'll learn about that are not in the mind up here.

They're in the body. Anyone here who has learned how to tie their shoelaces, I hope kids still learn that these days, with slip-ons. For those of us that know how to tie a lace, which I'm assuming all of us can, we just do it.

And there's a spiral. Have you ever tried to do it the opposite way? It's very difficult. It's really interesting, but that's a procedure in our nervous system. With time, as we gain more regulation, the ways in which we go to our brain, we bring ourselves down, we choose a different path, they become second nature, right? Yeah. Everyone's going to go try and try their shoelaces the opposite way after. If you try, just remember to stay connected to the ground, keep breathing, sense the breath, what might happen. All right. Next line. It's not. It is not. That's the word there. Important to process every single, those are the two words, event.

It's not important to process every single event. And by event, I mean traumatic experience, stress. I mean, that would be next to impossible, I think, as far as I know. But when we work with our physiology with an event or with a memory, if you think back to the swimming pool, this is why the swimming pool is so handy, you take one big ball out, it rearranges everything else in that pool. And sometimes balls, I'm making this up right now, have other balls stuck to it. So you take that one out and it actually cleans up that thing. It could be a limiting belief. It could be something like, "Oh, that thing always happens to me. " And then I heal it, or I work with it, and it's like, "Oh, that's just different now." Biological embodiment. Next line there.

This sort of falls into those words of awareness, self-awareness, that we worked with last week. Really just learning how to listen to the body signals, learning how to listen to the body's signals. Whereas the body's signals, that would be our interception, right? This perception of our internal environment. Someone asked, "How do we release the memories? Are we going to cover it? " So that's a very good question. It's a million dollar question, isn't it? I can't teach you how to release the memories, but everything we do in SBSM is in service so that your body remembers organically how to move those memories out. In this case, it would be the procedural memories, the shaking responses, perhaps, that self-defense pattern that you didn't get to do when that football was coming at your head, when you were playing soccer on the soccer field, or the football field, releasing that stored tension that didn't get to protect your brain.

Yeah? Those things I can't say. Jen, I'll use you as an example. Let's say Jen's like, "Yeah, I was on the soccer pitch when I was 14, and I got bonked on the head, and I got a concussion." I can't say to Jen, "Okay, Jen, I need you to just bring your hands up and pretend that you're protecting." I mean, we could do that, and we could visualize, and try to go in and get that stress out. And this is a bit more advanced, but I might in a private session with her say, "Well, what happened after the accident, or what was happening on that day?" Or, "Oh yeah, I remember I had a headache, or I had ringing in my ears." So there's ways of tuning into different experiences, or different sensations, or memories. "Oh, I remember as soon as that happened, the referee or my coach came up and asked if I was okay.

We might pad that event with other things that occurred, memories to help us remember a little bit what was occurring in that moment.

And this is a bit more advanced, as I said, but that is sort of like somatic experiencing 101, let's just say. If you were to work with a practitioner on a shock trauma, for example, they might ask the before or the after of the traumatic event. Now, of course, as you'll learn, as we get into more with talking about early developmental trauma, which will come in later training calls, there is no one event. It's just everything was dangerous. Everything was unsafe. And so there are not the memories of the same kind of stuff. We might not even have memories, because it's preverbal. It's before we make memories. And so that's where the kidney adrenal work, the diaphragm work that you'll get into in lab five, the joints work, working with the layers, because when we've got an early stress where we have no memory of it, our whole physiology is on some form of alert.

Now, of course, that can happen too as adults. Natural disasters, of course, war is a very hot topic right now. Famine, mass accidents, these sorts of things create a global fear in the person's system, and the collective, but at the end of the day, we're still wanting to come back to what can I sense? What can I move out? What can I resource to? That's why the resourcing lesson was number one. So as I say that, just maybe even in your mind, think of some of the

resources that you figured out that are good for you. And as I say that, I'm going to take a sip of tea.

So how do we move these memories out? It's very, very complex, and it's completely possible as we piece together all these educational pieces, and we keep growing our capacity through the neurosensory exercises. And again, back to the purpose of this call, this idea of somatic first aid, what are we doing in the moment when a stressful thing happens? Like my friend at the airport, nothing she can do to control what's happening, might as well stay grounded, kind, put that social engagement on, and not add to the stress and the frenzy of the airport. All right.

How to practice somatic first aid. So, write four things down. So, write down four things you can do when a minor, not life-harming event or stress takes place. So, I've kind of just given some of them away. So, I'll let you, for those who have pen and paper, write some of them down. I'll give you mine in a moment. If you don't have a pen and paper, just imagine them. So a stressful thing happens. It's not life-threatening. And the example of my colleague, that wasn't life-threatening, the airport today. It was just a nuisance, right? Now, if we haven't done our work, you know what I'm going to say? Someone will think that that flight that they can't get on is life-threatening. That is the end of the world. And then that's where people attack others, and get snippy and violent and abusive with words, and all the things.

But at the end of the day, that really is a minor stress. That's why I have here, not life harming. So for me, I've got to orient. Can we orient to ... Where am I? Oh yeah, I'm here.

Can we connect to the ground? Can we connect to the ground? So even as I say that right now, as I've been talking, have you been noticing the ground under you? So tune into that. For fun, were you paying attention? Let me know. Were you not paying attention? Be honest. If you weren't, that's cool. If you were, that's cool. There's no prizes if you were, because there'll be a moment in the future where we forget to pay attention to the ground, and that's okay, but that's how we sense the environment, is that pressure, that weight.

Yeah. Thanks, Sandy. I wasn't paying attention to the ground. Carmen said, "I wasn't. Just seems quite impossible to me. It'll come." Can we notice the breath? So we'll just take a moment to pause. As you notice, I'm going quite slow at the beginning of this call. So just this ability to feel the ground, look where we are, notice your breathing, following your impulse. Do you need to move a little bit, like I just did? Do you need to stretch? Do you need to stand up? Do you need to close your eyes? Do you need to - I saw, someone's quite warm? Do you need to cool down? Do you need to warm up?

So, let yourself follow those impulses. Do you need to sigh? You've been holding anything in your chest, in your voice, in your throat. So I say not life harming here, because if you were in a life harming situation, let's say you fall somewhere, and it's dangerous where you've fallen, right? Not the time to gently look around and orient. You might need to get out of the car's way that's coming at you, or you've slipped on a trail, and you might fall down something, like, don't worry about your breath. Just go into survival mode. Get into safety. Same with kids, of course. Your kid has an accident. If it's really life-threatening, you call that ambulance, right? You get them to safety. You worry about the trauma stuff later, right? That concept of life over limb, as we might say in first aid. But if it's not harming you, you've often used the example of the stubbed toe, my famous stubbed toe example.

If you stub your toe on your coffee table, which those things happen, you bang your elbow in a door. That is a perfect time to sense and feel and practice feeling a minor stress response. Make sense? A minor stress response. You cut your finger, maybe, you're chopping some vegetables, you burn your hand on the kettle. These things happen. Don't just rush through. Consciously go, "Ah, here's that thing Irene was talking about. This is a minor stress to my system. I am going to pause. I'm going to connect. I'm going to orient. I'm going to notice my breath." Maybe some tears want to come out, maybe a cry wants to come out. This is so important for kids, if you are raising children, or if you work with kids, rather than rushing to them, and saying, "You're okay, you're okay, you're okay." Or, "Let me see, let me see." Give them a moment.

Again, granted it's not life-threatening, to let their physiology move through what they have to move through, and stay with them, but don't meddle. For example, just let them experience what is happening, and then connect with them once they've gone through a little bit of their stress response. You have spouses, partners. It's the same thing. There's a tendency sometimes when an issue happens to go in and try to solve the problem, to help. And we want to do that, of course, again, if it is a real life-threatening event, but if someone just needs to have a cry, or they just need to be, like, "Ah, just, like, okay, let's do it."

"Let's do it. Let me know if you need anything." We can go into fix-it mode really quickly sometimes. All right. Next line, our final line there. If you can't process the somatic experience in the moment, that's the word, somatic experience. If you can't process the somatic experience in the moment, make a conscious note to do so when you have time and space. There will be numerous times where we are in a situation and we cannot properly process the pain, the anger, the sadness, the grief. I mentioned this, I think the other week, you've got a kid that needs you to be the strong person, the regulated person, and it's a scary situation. You might need to put your Superman or woman cape on, and be like, "Okay, I'm going to have to suppress the desire to scream and shout at this person that just cut us off, because we need to get home safely." It's like the kid might've had a little bit of a scare.

Let's say it's like a near miss in a car accident. It's like, "It's okay. We're good. How are you feeling?" And then you might get home, give your kid a snack, put them in front of the television for a bit, and then you go somewhere and you rage a little bit, you get that stress out. Does that make sense? But you don't get it out in front of that minor, who needs a self-regulating, co-regulating adult in front of them. So that's where you're like, okay, I just had to override a little bit here, to stay calm with my kid, or maybe you're in a job situation. If anybody here works in service. Oops, my phone's still on. If anybody here works in service, I'm sure you've had the customer that you just want to ring their neck, but of course you can't. And so that's where you have to de-stress and decompress on your break at the end of the day, so that you don't carry that stuff inside of you.

All right.

Page two. So this is continuing from page one. So for example, for example. So again, this is in service of, how can we let out and let go of these things afterwards. So, do some nervous system health basics. So, that would be, of course, orienting, sensing the ground under you, noticing what your breath is doing. Are you holding it? Do you need to let out a sigh, let out a scream, let out a moan? So, we get into the deeper labs. We'll learn some tools for moving out healthy aggression with the teeth, with growls and sounds. Again, remembering that we're humans, but we're also mammals. We have that fight in us. We will protect if we need to, if something is harming us, and often the teeth want to engage. So, nervous system health basics would be more gentle stuff, orienting breath, feeling the ground under, or using neurosensory exercises.

So, that's what I'm meaning here. As we get into deeper neurosensory exercises, there'll be more opportunity to feel the differences in how our lungs can expand. For example, how we can touch into the skin, the fascia, the diaphragms, tune into the spaces and containers of the body.

Seek out some social and ... Sorry, I'll say that again. Next line. Seek out some support and social engagement. Now, of course, everybody has different ways in which we might do this. It might be through if we have a husband, a wife, a partner, a friend, a sibling, a family member, a church group. Talking even to the grocery store checkout person sounds strange, but if you're feeling a little low, strike up a conversation when you're buying something outside. Saying hello just to random strangers who are obviously open to saying hello to you is enough. Our social engagement wires don't have to have, necessarily, a close person, a safe person, yes.

But just remembering those basics of saying hello to people when you're out on the street, if they're welcoming the hello, of course. And as you'll learn as we're learning that social engagement, what does it do? That ventral vagal of the parasympathetic, it brings the heart rate down. This is why it's so nice when you have a first responder who says, "Hey, my name is.

I'm here to help you." They make a connection. I don't think that they're learning about the polyvagal theory in first responder school, but we know in first responder and first aid, after you assess for no danger, you go and you talk to the person. Can I help you?

I'm here to do this. Connect with nature. That's the next one. Connect with nature. Can also visualize. So this can be literal, or this is why parks and cities, I know a lot of us probably live in cities here. The cities that have park space and waterways and benches under trees. I think I remember seeing somewhere that those cities have happier people, because they've got spaces to go. Whereas the concrete jungles are a little bit more difficult, and yet you can still see the sky, can still see the clouds. So that nature also orients us out into the world. Make use of resources. So again, this was from lesson one, from lab one.

Music, movement, maybe it's a spiritual practice, faith. Anything that grounds you, connects you to something that isn't you. Sometimes we need to take a break from us. It's like, I just need to watch some Seinfeld or some silly show that makes me laugh. I think I mentioned this the other day. I recently bought some big coffee table books. One was an atlas, something really nice and tactile about flipping through a big book with pictures. It's shiny. You read a little thing. The print is really big. It's not hard to read. I don't need my other glasses. It's like, "Oh, I'm just going to flip through this." And it just sits on a table in our living area. That to me is a good resource. Seems silly. Why do I need to have an atlas or a book about cooking? I've got a big cooking book and we don't even follow recipes, but there's something nice about flipping through, and seeing the pretty pictures of the food like, "Ooh, that's neat." So, resources are very important.

It doesn't mean that we're weak if we need to use a resource. It's just human nature. We've created so much beauty and art, right? Blankets, quilted things, textures, are all resources.

All right. The four whens. So this is one of my favorite parts, the four whens. So it's - when not to resource. You might be going, "What, Irene, you just told us to resource?" And now I'm going to say, "This is when you might not resource." So I'm just going to note these, and then

we'll take a quick little break, and kind of reorient to where we are. But when not to resource, when not to orient, on page three, when not to take a deep breath, and when you're not sure what to do. So that's what we'll get into for the rest of the call.

I'm seeing the chat very busy. I hope that you guys aren't chatting behind my back here. Let's see. So, before we get into the next one, see if you need to move your body a little bit, take your eyes off the screen. Someone asked, "Can coffee or matcha be a resource?" And Jen said, "Yeah, they can also be stimulants." Everyone's different. Everyone's different. So, some people find that they cannot drink, or it doesn't necessarily have to be drinking. They can't consume caffeine. It's too much for their system. Again, it comes back to, is it something that you need to get through the day? That's not typically the best, but if your system needs something, because you just haven't gotten to that regulation, then that's where you make a choice. Yeah, I'm going to have an extra something in the day, but everyone's different. I personally feel sick when I drink matcha.

Can't stand it. Can't stand the taste of it. Makes me feel loopy. So does mate, yerba mate. And everyone's like, "Oh, that's the better caffeine." You see? But everyone's different. So you have to find what is the thing for you.

Everyone's different. So again, often people will say, "Oh, caffeine's bad because it stimulates the nervous system too much." Have matcha or have green tea, but you can't make that assumption on an individual unique system. We also have different cultures. Our genetics are different. Some people are just better with certain foods, certain drinks, and our bodies change. Sometimes it's like, this is where that - following that impulse. We get into a habit of what we have and we don't even think, do I even want to eat this in the morning? Is this even something that I like?

Culture is huge when it comes to our food preferences. So yeah, it all comes back to your own system, what makes sense for you, and knowing, oh, I don't think I like this anymore. I'm going to change it up. All right. So the four whens. Yeah, raw cacao. Can't stand that either. Don't

force me to eat anything dark of the cocoa variety. Can't stand it. I know it's a funny joke we have on our team, but someone will always bring the strong, strong cacao, and I won't touch it. So again, some people love that stuff. Others don't. Personal preference also is connected to what your body wants, what your physiology wants.

So what we're going to go through here is in service of, in some ways, what someone asked a little while ago on how do we release these memories, or how do we get those balls out of our pool? Because eventually we want to dive into that tsunami wave and surf it. Yeah? There has been a misnomer in a lot of, again, the popular press social media world that regulation is just about containing experience and doing all these self-regulation practices to stay calm, to bring ourselves down. But in the classic model that Peter Levine created, somatic experiencing, and his model does not address early trauma and developmental trauma, by the way, that's why we bring in other aspects in SBSM, but we want to hit activation. We want to feel and experience and process the terror, the fear. We want to see the accident and feel the impact in our body, but we don't want to shut down or go into more activation.

We want to process it, sense it, so we can surf that wave to the shore. And then that's where we might have the tears or the shaking or the crying, or all the other things that come out. And so this is very important. Listen, in order to actually get these balls out, like the big ones that maybe we know we need to process, we cannot keep resourcing and orienting and breathing it out. Of course, you have to keep breathing, but we need to go into, as Peter Levine would say, the eye of the needle, into the eye of the storm, but we don't want to get stuck in there. So this is why we're spending all this time prepping with education and capacity building. And eventually there is enough experience under my belt and the alumni here to say confidently, once you get those skills on board and your swimming pool is a bit bigger and you've done enough somatic first aid, all the times you stub your toe, all the time someone pisses you off, you go to your higher brain, and you work with yourself to resource and to orient, it prepares you so that when that big boulder is ready to come out, whether it's the car accident, the attack, whatever it might be, you can hold that, look at it and chuck it in whatever way you have to.

Like this is a metaphor.

So the four whens, so, when not to resource. So when to resource externally, this is back to the bullet points, everyone. When to resource externally versus internally depends on many factors. It depends on many factors. Those are the two words. I can't say to you, resource when you feel this tingling in your gut. I can't tell you that. You have to feel it and be like, "Huh, I'm going to feel this today. Nope, I don't want to feel this today. Where's that funny Seinfeld show?" This is something you have to ask yourself. It depends on many factors. Just like I mentioned, you're that parent, and your kid is scared, and you're a little scared, you've got to hold it together for them so that they feel that they're safe with you. That's when you would not go through the process. That is when you would resource.

Let's go get some ice cream. Let's get you a treat, whatever it might be. Those things are helpful in some situations.

Next line. As more capacity, that's the word, as more capacity is cultivated. So, a bigger pool. So next word, bigger pool. And more containment is on board. That's the next word. Containment is on board. We talked about containment last week, and more exit paths. So back to imagining that swimming pool with more exit paths and better biological embodiment, so we can stay connected to the ground. I'm here. I can sense my breath. The need for external resources decreases. The need for external resources decreases. Now, this doesn't mean that we don't want to have resources around us. When I say this, I think of a client I had years ago in private practice. She's doing so, so well now. She's completely, I would say completely in a state of self-regulation, but when I started seeing her, she would come to my office with a purse full of stuff, snacks, water, and essential oils.

God only knows what she had in that purse.

It was like her support blanket, essentially. And towards the end of our work, she would just show up with her car keys and her wallet. That's all she needed. There was no, "What if I need

these things when I'm driving to Irene's office?" And that was just so pivotal, which was like, "Wow, I don't need all these things." She stopped dousing herself in peppermint oil. It was great. It's like, okay, we can just be a human and not need all these things. Now, does this mean that we might not have them? In certain cases? Of course not. Sometimes we need those things, but that showed to me, okay, she's built enough capacity. We've moved enough boulders out of her system. She doesn't need all these external resources, and that's safety.

Wow, I don't need to have all these things on hand all the time. Next line, third line down. So we might consider not. So this is in service of processing maybe one of those balls in our pool. So we might not go. We might consider not going to a resource when we are feeling a somatic experience, bubbling up, or all already present. At this time, we might stick with, that's the word. You're going to stick with it. Stick with what is being felt somatically so we can assess it and integrate it. So I'll say this again. We might consider not going to a resource. So again, this is that conscious choice, right? That's where you have to make the conscious choice. I'm not going to go to the ... I'm going to just see if I can be here in my kitchen. I'm really wanting to go to the refrigerator and soothe myself with food.

I'm just going to see if I can be with this anger that I'm sensing right now. This is just an example. And oh, my breath, I can feel it. This is where we're feeling this somatic experience. It's bubbling up. It's present. At this time, we might stick with what is being felt somatically, so we can access it and integrate it. So that's just a small example of how we might move through that. And rather than sit here, just to give you, again, a scenario, I need to stand up and stomp my feet. It's not enough to just sit and be still. I've got to do the Harry Caray, get my body going. Just get it out. And then that's where then you would then be like, okay, that felt good. Do I need to go and soothe myself with that resource, with that food, for example?

And then again, conscious choice. No, I'm fine. I don't need to do this. I can go and do the next thing in my day.

Next line. Oh, I kind of already said this. So, but making the choice, choice, it comes down to

choice, to not dive into the felt sense. So you can also choose, it's like, no, I can't. I can't. I don't have time to process this. Going to go to that resource. So make the conscious choice to not dive into the felt sense and honoring, that's the word, honoring our limits by using an external or intra resource, is healing in itself. So I'll explain that. So this ability to just honor, again, this is back to the conscious brain of, I really need that thing, or I really need to sense my breath. I need to do some containment.

I'm not at a point right now where I want to feel that deep pain or process that memory, for example. But that choice, that is healing. The difference between us here as adults versus when, let's say for many of us, our traumas might have occurred when we were children, when we were teens, when we were infants, or when we were adults, before we had the conscious ability to go, "I can choose a different path." So everything before that was sort of unconscious. And so now this choice to go to that resource or not is a rewiring in itself.

It's a rewiring in itself. Next line. So, overriding our capacity. So now let's say we override our capacity. This creates more strain and survival stress and is counterproductive. So it goes back to those beach balls. Now, as I mentioned, there are certain instances where we might need to override our capacity, because again, we're responsible for little people, or we need to be a good citizen, and we can't go ram into that person that just cut us off on the highway. I don't want to do that. So our desire might be, I really want to get this survival response out, but it's like, I've got to stop that impulse to do this thing that probably isn't good. So again, this is why I have this, sort of, when not to resource. Sometimes we have to, sometimes we don't.

Okay. And this takes time. Let's go to page three. This is something that gets easier, it gets more robust, it gets more intelligent in our system the more we do it. Just like tying those shoelaces, it becomes second nature. The first bit, it's a little clunky. You've got to think about it. How do I do this? But then it becomes second nature. All right, page three. All right. So when not to orient, when not to orient. So again, this is kind of funny, because one of the first lessons you guys learn is orienting, right? There's a few orienting lessons. So oddly, there are

times when we might not want to orient, because overorienting can also take us out of our experience. So again, this is so individual. This is so individual.

Not too long ago, I was with someone who, I don't know how to say this. I could see that they were feeling something intense, and the instinct was to look out into the room, and I knew that they had more capacity. I'm like, "What are you doing?" And they said, "Well, I'm orienting, because that's what we have to do. " And I said, "Well, that's one thing that we have to do, but what would it be like to actually not look out right now, and sense what's going inside?" And it was a new concept to them. So this is where this reminds me of back in the day in university, if those of you have studied a subject at length, and some of you might know this, the professors might say in the first year, "What I'm going to teach you today, you're going to wonder why we're teaching you this, because in four years, everything is going to be different, but we have to start with this."

And I remember, I think it was a physics teacher telling us that, "This is what we have to teach you to make sense of all these steps, but when you get to this higher level, it all falls out the window." Now, I'm not saying you ditch orienting, because that's not the case, but orienting eventually becomes something that is second nature and natural as opposed to, okay, I'm going to think about orienting. Does that make sense? Animals naturally orient, right? The Biology of Stress video number two, I talk about the impala, or it could be any, it could be the deer in the field, and they hear that snap of the twig. And what do their ears do?

Oh, what is that? That is not them thinking, "I hear a snap, I better orient." It's immediate. When we start to get our regulation back on board, those of you who have been more in a functional freeze will have a startle response that will startle you, because you've never felt it. This was me. I remember the first time I felt my startle response. It was the year I met Seth. It was in 2010 on a bridge in Oregon. I'll never forget it. I was standing on this bridge looking at this beautiful river and it was loud, so I couldn't hear. And a couple stood on the bridge, and I jumped out of my skin, and they felt so bad, but I was so excited, because I went, "Oh my God, I just had an actual startle response." Now, some of you are like, "That sounds crazy, Irene."

"I startle all the time." That just means that your system has a different way of being in the world. There's more activation, for example. So I share that because we want to have a natural defensive orienting pattern, but we also want our exploratory orienting pattern to start to be natural too. But at the beginning, we're doing it more consciously. I'm going to feed another thing in here. It's like learning the language. Some of you have heard me talk about the analogy of learning a second language as an adult. Who here has done that successfully? There is a moment where you then start to realize you're not thinking about the words you need to say, and it just comes out, right? But when you're learning it, you're thinking about what you have to say. And then it comes out, and it's like, whoa, this is interesting.

Same with raising a child. You feed them information, you talk to them, they read, and eventually one day they just start talking. It's like, "What happened?" So that wiring is in us. So I share this because eventually the lessons become less important and the natural tendencies of regulation bubble up. That make sense?

It takes time, but we're meant to have a natural orienting response. We're meant to have a startle response, and we're meant to have a defensive orienting response in the right moments. It doesn't serve us if we're constantly in a startle response or constantly in a defensive orienting response, but it also doesn't make sense for us to never notice the danger around us. That's not good either. So everyone's going to be a little different. All right. Next one. So, orienting can take us out of processing internal sensation. So, this was in service of me telling that story about someone who was constantly orienting whenever they felt overwhelmed, and it made me go, "Oh, this person doesn't know how to sense what's happening." So we can orient and feel sensation, but the question is, are we orienting to avoid sensation?

That's the clincher. So can we look around, orient, sense our breath, feel the ground under us, and still feel that tightness in our chest, or the clenching in our gut? Next line down. Okay, this is where I go, but that's in brackets. But it's better, in my opinion, to orient than to disconnect. So it's better than disconnecting. So again, it's still a foolproof way of staying connected to the

here and now. I'm just going to look around. Where am I? Oh, I'm here. Okay. You have to be the judge. That's the next line. You have to be the judge.

You have to learn how to experiment. You have to learn how to experiment with what you can and cannot tolerate. And it really is about tolerate. It's like, "Ugh, this is just too much." So back to the swimming pool, the moment you white knuckle it, I'm like, "I'm just going to feel this. I've got to get this trauma out." And you white knuckle and it's like, that is not ... If you go into processing something with strain and willpower, that swimming pool isn't going to let that ball out of the pool. It's going to hold onto it tighter. So in those moments, it's like, okay, just orient, get a resource. All right, next line. Breathing.

So this one's a tricky one, because breath is one of those physiological processes that we really can control. And it serves a purpose sometimes, and sometimes it doesn't. So when not to take a deep breath. So again, know that I'm going to say these things, but you have to sense in moments what your system needs. So, the same points for breath as for orienting. So, it's kind of exactly like we could go through those bullet points above for orienting as for breath. Breathing can disconnect us from sensation. Adding breath can take us out of feeling a fear response that we might need to go through and sense to fully get that ball out of our pool.

And sometimes we need to take a deep breath. So, there's a spontaneous deep breath that is kind of like the holy grail of, oh, this person finally settled a little bit. I think animals are some of the best examples of this. When you have ... Cats don't do it so much, but dogs do. They'll do the big, the sigh. You hear their diaphragm kind of letting go, a little slobber, maybe. It's like this, depending on the dog. That deep breath is a sign of a settling. So sometimes we need a deep breath. Sometimes we just need extra oxygen. If we were to all start to get up right now, and do 80's aerobics together, which I won't make you do, but we could pretend. If I was to do that while teaching, I would start to get out of breath. Yeah? And big hair, someone said.

Yeah.

Yeah. The need for oxygen is because the muscles are moving, and we need more nutrition to the cells, and we need to get out of carbon dioxide. That's a byproduct of metabolism. So sometimes we need to breathe a bit more. I often hear about people who take meetings while going on hikes, or walking on a treadmill. I don't understand that. I'm just constantly breathing deep on the phone. It doesn't make sense to me. But that's because I'm moving, my body needs not only more oxygen, but it needs to expel. Now, I'll give you an example of breathing, taking over. So again, when I was in private practice, often I would work on a table, because I did a lot of touch work, and that's the work you'll learn with the kidney adrenals, the diaphragms, et cetera, that you'll get into shortly. I could tell when someone was trying to bypass something hard or something difficult, they often didn't know it consciously.

That's why they were there. But there would be a very familiar pattern that would look like this.

It was like this exhale. It was a slowing down. Now, there's nothing wrong with that. If you need to calm yourself in a heated situation, like at the airport, because things are all over, and you can't sense what's happening, then go for it. But in that therapeutic sense in my office, I would say to them, "What would it be like to actually not do that right now, and just let the breath do what it wants to do?" And inevitably there would be, in most cases, because I often worked with folks with more chronic illness conditions, their breath would go almost to nothing. What is that indicative of? In the autonomic nervous system states, this is the shutdown. This is the collapse. This is that - "I think I'm going to die, so I better slow everything down, and prepare for death." You're not thinking that, but it's like, "I'm going to stop breathing, and make all of the stuff inside small, and hide." So in that case, I'd be like, "Don't try to breathe out."

"Don't try to take a deep breath." And we would sit there, and then wait. And of course there's more going on. And often this big breath will come. And often with that, there will be the tears, there'll be the grief, maybe there's anger, maybe there's some shaking. This is why the breathing lessons in SBSM, they're very specific. They're not the box breathing that you might

learn in a breathwork course, if anyone's done that, where you breathe in for five, you hold for five, you expel for five, exhale. The lessons in SBSM are about working with the ribs, working with the belly, growing the capacity in your trunk where your lungs are, and your ribs are to feel breath going in all sorts of different directions. There's also a lesson where you wait, and wait, and you wait at the end of an exhale, and you wait until the breath comes.

Your breath will come. And what happens is it makes you more, the word I'm looking for, tolerant, to high carbon dioxide levels. That's the science of it. And often people panic because they feel a rise in CO₂, and then they try to get more in. And then this is what hyperventilating causes. And what happens, you often can pass out. So we don't want that. So that lesson, cultivating the exhale, is about tolerating, even though I don't say it, because I don't get sciencey in the lesson, it's about tolerating that rise in CO₂. And then that's one actual way, and I don't like to use the word reset very often, but it is one way to reset the respiration.

Very important when you're playing with your breath to not be in a pool, not be in a bathtub, you want to be on ground, because our system can black out if we push it. So this is one of these things not to scare anyone, where we don't want to push breathwork. It can disrupt what's called the acid-based balance of our blood, and we don't want that. We don't want that. Okay. Number four. I'm going to take a little sip here. All right. Just a reminder, you guys, it looks like the chat is really busy. Hopefully it's nothing too distracting, but if you've got a real pressing question, put it into the general question thread, for afterwards. All right. Number four.

Actually, one more story for breath. Let's see. Yeah, we've got time. So the other night I was having trouble, I don't know what was happening. I couldn't sleep right away. And I thought I would try some classic breathwork, which, sometimes, I play with. And the moment I started to manage my breath, I felt this strong sympathetic activation in my thigh muscles. So I was sitting up in bed, covers were all over. I was all cozy. I didn't feel scared, but I was just awake. And so I started to do kind of a classic inhale for four, hold for seven, out for eight, sort of a popular breathing technique. And I felt this jitteriness in my legs and I went, "Oh, ah, I've got some

stored survival energy. I don't need to breathe right now. I need to kick my legs under the covers." And so I just did a little running dance, and then that increased my breath, because I'm moving my legs, and then I was able to sleep.

So you can also experiment with these things. It's like, oh, my system didn't want control. It needed to let out activation. I have no idea what was going on that had that in my system that night, but that happens. That doesn't mean one is dysregulated. It just means I might've had to have overridden that day with more work, or more whatever it was, and my system needed to let that out. I hope that makes sense. So the moment you try to do a controlling thing, and you feel more sympathetic activation, for example, in this case, it's like, "Ooh, this doesn't need control. It needs movement. Needs movement." Okay. So when you are not sure what to do, I can't read my own words, when you are not sure what to do. So again, this is in service of the four whens. We went through orienting, resourcing, and breath, but sometimes you're like, "I'm not sure what to do."

And that's okay. The first three words are, do not worry. Again, granted you're not in a life-threatening situation.

When you're feeling stuff and it's confusing, this comes back to putting your higher brain hat on, and going, "Huh, don't freak out. Let's just connect to what's happening." So you might just need to go back to the basics. What's under me? Can I feel the ground under me? Can I sense what's happening? It might be that you orient. It might be that you resource. And here's what's interesting is you might sense something that's uncomfortable, and you'll go through this laundry list of all the things you've learned from me. You know you're on the right track when you're like, "None of that's working. I'm just going to feel. I'm just going to be." But you have an out. This is different than starting with, say, just being. This is why just starting out with meditating is not enough for some. Sometimes you need to start with this laundry list of things to resource to, to orient to, to notice so that you can then just sit and be.

It's like the system knows it's got a protection emergency thing, like, "If it's too much, I can do this. I can get up. I can move." So, next line, remember, plus, remember, learning a second language, as I've already mentioned, learning a second language takes practice and time.

If you're confused, that's okay. It's just like when you learn, my goodness, the second language, and all the different tenses, and what, that one's masculine, that one's feminine, huh? What does that mean? Why is that that? I feel for people who learn the English language, all the different ways that you write there and were. It's like, how does a person distinguish those things? So the confusion is okay. You don't know what to do. That's okay. The good thing is at least you're asking, "What should I do?" As opposed to reacting or going into shutdown.

Next line. As more neurosensory skills, skills, think of these as skills because they are your learning skills in SBSM. The skills create the regulation. They create the capacity. They create the space so that you can release stuff. So, as more neurosensory skills come into your repertoire, and this is a bit of a run-on sentence that's going to happen, all the lessons within the labs coupled, what's the word, coupled with the theory, these ABCs and one, two, threes, page four, go to page four, folks. We start to string together the words of internal somatic awareness. You see?

All the things, the lessons, the education, the theories, the calls, the lessons, all of it strings together, and that creates this internal knowing. So these are the words of internal somatic awareness. With practice, we begin to have our favorite internal resources we go to without conscious thought. So let's talk about that for a second. So with practice, we begin to have our favorite internal resources that we go to without conscious thought. So who here has found even in the first few weeks of being here, and of course the alumnis, you guys have more experience, what's a resource that's internal now? Think about it.

Something that's not outside of you. I will wait. Yes, my interoception. Yeah. Just noticing what's happening inside. Potent posture. Feeling my butt in the chair. Self-holding, so that containment, the joints, lessons. Pendulation. Yeah, eventually we'll get to that, depending on

where you're at. Being able to shift from noticing something intense to notice something less intense. Pausing. Just noticing the layers of the body. A hot water bottle would be external, right? And yet it's causing a shift in temperature, so that temperature will shift things, but that's still external. Following impulse. Yeah. Double inhale. Self-compassion. Grounding. Yep. Ah, feeling my ribcage exist in space. Curiosity like a child.

Treating myself like a newborn baby. Yeah. So that's like a conscious attunement to yourself. That's great. Knowing that I can work with everything and nothing is wrong. Yeah, that's a bit more of a higher brain, but that's still an internal resource. That's why I keep saying, "Notice this higher brain of ours." It has to choose things. My humor. Yep. Humor is so important. Can't take ourselves too seriously. Verbalizing. Yep. Saying things out loud, singing. Yeah, writing things down. That's like half, half, because you're doing an action a little bit more. And you see, thanks, everyone. All these are for you. They're not for me, but they're ways in which we figure out how to be with our experience.

Raising a little human when they start to find that internal resource is, like, magical. It's like they know how to be with what they're sensing without shutting it down. All right. Thanks everyone. Okay. So - next line. So with practice - next line. We begin to naturally move our internal system without conscious thought. So with practice, we begin to naturally, what's the word, move to our internal system without conscious thought. This means we are becoming more fluent. That's the word, fluent in the language of somatic experience. We're getting more comfortable with it, with our growing nervous system capacity. So this is still about capacity. It's not about the traumas necessarily, but we're growing our capacity to be with the stuff that's there.

This means we are getting better at attuning to ourselves. Attuning, someone said, treating myself like a baby. Yeah. That's why - that following impulse, while abstract and quite vague, is really powerful. That's the beginning of our life. Is someone attuning to me or am I here all alone? And if we don't fix that, and I'm going to use the term fix, if we don't fix that, our transformation will be very clunky, because you can do all the lessons and everything, and you

can be a perfect neurosensory exercise student, and know how to orient. But if we're not getting into that intimate attunement with our own physiology, and what it needs, we're not getting to the root. And this is of course for those who've had early developmental trauma, attachment wounds, et cetera. Not everybody has, but most of us have in some way. It's that language with how can we attune to ourselves, back to this bullet point, not to mention knowing what we need and when.

I have been in this world of helping and healing humans. It'll be 30 years next year. I started working with people in '97, 1997. And no matter where I was, whether it was nutrition, I was in the nutrition field, I was in the exercise science world, I was in the mind body field with Feldenkrais. You could teach someone the skills and the behavior, but it only kept happening if it came from them internally. This is why we still have magazines at the grocery store that say, "Get your abs in six weeks." Or, "These are the 10 foods that will blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." Those things out there, and it's in the nervous system world too, which I'm starting to really realize, they're nice, but they're not teaching us this self-attunement, this internal drive, this internal life force need. It starts when we're really, really young.

So it's so important that we attune to ourselves and not just do something for the sake of doing it.

So, next line. So for many of us, this process of better attuning to ourselves, being more fluent in our somatic experience and being with awareness is new territory. I'm taking the words out of my mouth, similar to how a newborn baby is constantly having new experiences, right? Everything a newborn baby experiences is new at the beginning. It's really mind blowing when you think about it. The smell of things, right? It's a terrible trick, but when parents give their toddler lemon for the first time, it's just the look on the face. It's like, aha, that's a new experience, tasting sour, bitter, sweet, all the things.

Next line. So this is how building capacity creates nervous system regulation in an adult. So again, I know that many of us have been doing this work for a while here, alumni have, to the

newbies. This is a very different way of looking at building regulation. It is, I have seen the way that it works, because we're not just packing on exercises and practices. I'm really demanding you guys in a positive way to go into these deeper wirings of how we listen and feel our bodies, and how we consider and maybe grieve the fact that we didn't get that stuff at the beginning. That's totally normal, to have a bit of a grief session, to feel a little sad. "Wow, I didn't get this." Okay. You go through that, and you're like, "Okay, but I can do it now." That's what's cool about being an adult.

You can choose, right? You can choose with that higher brain. Final line, as we know, whereas for an infant ... So it's just so interesting. We're here as adults building self-regulation, whereas for an infant, their self-regulation is created by a co-regulation with another human as a result of that attunement. So there's kind of this debate in a way you cannot build self-regulation without being with another human.

I don't necessarily think that's true. Other humans are wonderful if we find the right ones. Nothing wrong with good therapy, good partners, good friendships, but we can actually do quite a bit on our own, because of resources and because of nature and because of our higher brain. So this building of co-regulation can happen with self. You are learning how to have a relationship to self. It's kind of what the monks and the meditators, the high level, it's like, "I'm just with myself. I'm with myself. I'm being with my own senses and thoughts and feelings and behaviors, and that in itself is a really important relationship." As we know, we can be with a ton of people and not feel good regulation. So the person isn't so much important as the relationship you have with what you're connecting with.

So as I mentioned earlier on the hand out, regarding resources, a resource can be an object, but it could also be spirit. It can be faith. It can be the trees. It could be the universe. And that's what's cool about humans is in the wild an animal doesn't ... Well, we shouldn't say doesn't. We don't know where their brain goes with the connection to the environment. We just have this higher level of sensing and tuning into things. It's very different. And that's why I think humans can recover from so much. Whereas if you have an animal that's been really harmed

and isn't doing well, it's harder to retrain them to be regulated. We know this with animals that have not been treated well. It takes a lot of time because they don't have that higher brain. The way that you retrain them is through conditioning.

We've been conditioned so deeply as humans, and so we're deconditioning, and we're going back to higher brain, free will. This is very advanced. This is way more than just doing some breathwork to calm our nervous system down. We're really diving into the deep core of where do we get here? Where do we go wrong as humans? And how can we come back to that higher brain, but we have to bring the body in, and what we're working with. So that is my final speech of the day, right at 12:30. I know the chat's been very busy. I hope it was a productive chat for those in it. Thanks, Jen, for being there. And yeah, these calls are very important, because it shows the depth. The exercises are equally important though. Yeah? Just listening to me isn't enough. You have got to practice. You've got to make the mistakes, and fumble around, and then integrate this together.

And then most importantly, integrate it with life. This doesn't work in a vacuum. You have to interact with the world, and see how it goes when you're with others in the world with this different view.

I'll say one last thing. I mentioned that thing about social engagement with people in the world. If someone doesn't want to talk to you, that's cool. So that's the other thing. This is where your attunement is so important. Again, let's just say you've got to go grocery shopping later today, and it looks like the person at the checkout is having a real shitty day, and they don't want to look at you in the eye. Don't force them to talk to you. That's where you go, "Ah, this person isn't really interested." So you honor that. That is also attuning to your environment and using your higher brain. Whereas some people, you're like, "Oh, that person could really be given a compliment." Like, "Oh, I love your hair," or, "That's a cool shirt you're wearing," or, "How's the weather?" These are little things that allow us to break the ice, but you have to also know, "Ah, that person doesn't want to talk."

“Okay, cool. I made that attunement,” and then you go on. So I want to be very clear that you don't want to just go start talking to everyone who's around you, because that also can be off-putting for some. All right. Thanks, Jen. Thanks, Susan, for hanging out and keeping an eye on things. We will be back with training call number three next week, and then there'll be a Q&A call Thursday, back with Seth, I believe. So, we'll talk to you all later. Bye, everyone.