

The Vagus Nerve & Healing Trauma

Part 3 Worksheet



Welcome to the Vagus Nerve & Healing Trauma

3-Part Video Training

In Part 3 of this series, we examine two primary ways the vagus nerve is part of trauma healing: building capacity and self-regulation.

Building capacity

Healing trauma requires that we work with and release the traumatic stress in our nervous system, which means freeing up the trapped fight, flight and freeze survival responses. Referring to the Window of Tolerance model, it means to support our nervous system to move out of being stuck in hyperarousal or hypoarousal (or fluctuating between the two) and become more regulated.

To do this requires the capacity to be present in our experience, to our bodily sensations and emotions, as we work with the layers of stuck traumatic stress. Through being present when moving towards or into the waves of sympathetic or dorsal activation, the stuck survival energy can be met and metabolized with proper support. Being embodied and present, even in times of intensity, is a function of the ventral vagal complex.

I discussed the following skills and tools to support the ventral vagal and build capacity (and some of these also do the direct work of healing trauma):

- Tracking your nervous system with the Window of Tolerance Scale.
- [BioDynamic Breathwork & Trauma Release](#) due to its focus on embodiment and working with trapped survival energy.
- Increasing interoceptive awareness through somatic practices such as yoga, tai chi, and qigong
- Psychotherapy

- Group therapy and trauma healing processes such as [Path of Love](#)
- Grounding
- Orientation (See my YouTube video [Orientation - Support for Getting Unstuck](#))

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation practices support our nervous system in shifting out of dysregulation and bringing more ventral vagal access. They are great to use when you notice you are moving out of your Window of Tolerance and need support to move back into regulation. These practices will also build capacity but are generally slower than the practices I listed above.

I discussed the following skills and tools that can support vagal tone and increased self-regulation:

- Slow, deep breathing exercises (see my eBook *Breathwork & Your Nervous System*).
- Meditation
- Humming, singing, chanting
- Connecting with feelings of gratitude
- Spending time in nature
- Self-touch
- “Vooooo-ing”

With all of the above practices, it is important to stay connected to your body and notice the interoceptive impact that it has - what sensations, feelings, and bodily experiences arise?

Thank you for joining me for this video series! Understanding the intricate role of the vagus nerve in trauma recovery offers a pathway toward increased resilience and insights into our physiological responses and emotional experiences. By fostering awareness and implementing practices that increase capacity and support vagal tone and regulation, you can embark on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Through compassionate self-care, therapeutic interventions, and a commitment to holistic healing, together we can cultivate a sense of safety, connection, and wholeness, reclaiming our innate capacity for transformation.

Be well,

Prema