

Finding Safety in an Uncertain World



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rhythmofregulation.com

"Listening, when it opens and we're feeling safe enough, leads toward connection with other people... Our listening opens through numerous portals. We think of it commonly as an auditory phenomenon, yet it passes through other portals as well. We listen with our ears, yes, but we also listen with our eyes, our minds, our hearts, our touch, and upstream from all sensations and perceptions we listen with our autonomic nervous system."

*Conversation with Gary Whited
Excerpt from Anchored*

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The autonomic nervous system is at the heart of daily living.

It is the common denominator in our human experience.

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We are inextricably connected...
...one nervous system to another



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The Autonomic Challenge

Besieged by signals of danger and disconnection

Searching for signs of safety and connection

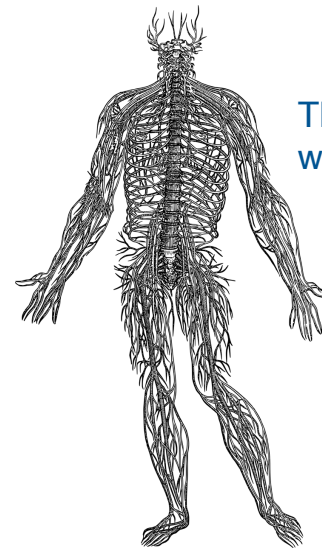
Unfamiliar territory

Unpredictable events

No time to catch our breath



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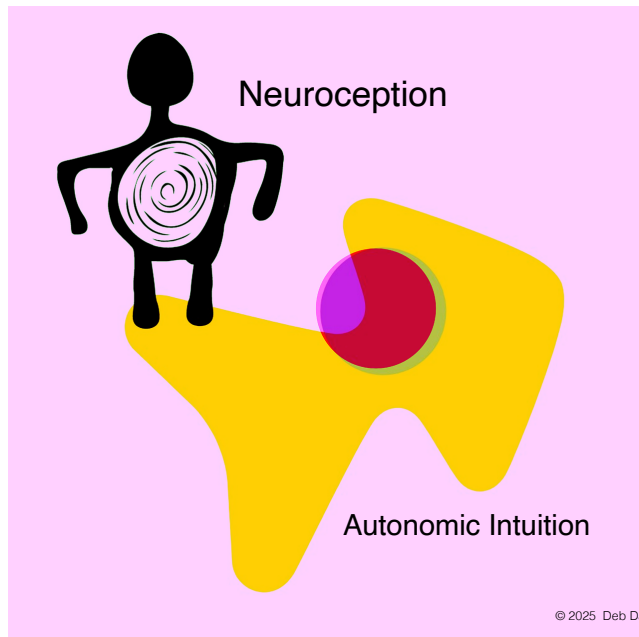
The world inside shapes the world outside...

Neuroception

Hierarchy

Co-regulation

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Where did your neuroception take you?
How did that land in your system?
What story did your brain create?



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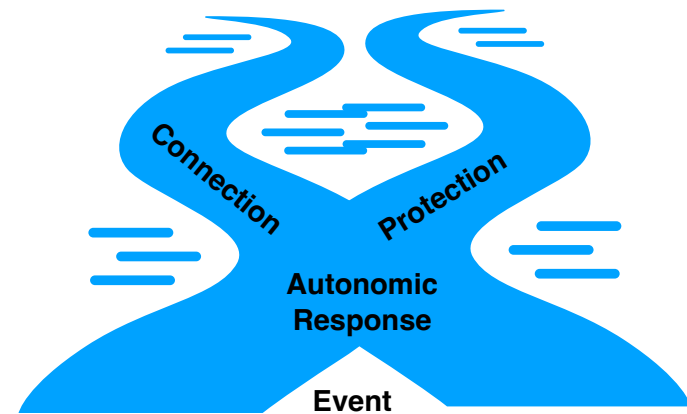
Curiosity Creates Connection

Our responsibility is to tune into what happens in our own nervous system...

...and be curious about what is happening in another nervous system.

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Intervening Variable



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Before the brain can assemble thoughts and language, the nervous system initiates a response that moves us toward an experience and into connection, takes us into the mobilizing protection of fight and flight, or rescues us through shutdown and disconnection.



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This is not a cognitive choice...it is a biological one.



I'm not unwilling. I'm unable.

Ryland, S., Johnson, L. N., & Bernards, J. C. (2021). Honoring protective responses: Reframing resistance in therapy using polyvagal theory. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-021-09584-8>

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The Autonomic Hierarchy



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Anchored in Safety - Pathway of Connection
We are curious, open to new possibilities, present in the moment, ready to bring our purpose and passion to life.



VENTRAL VAGAL *system of safety and connection*

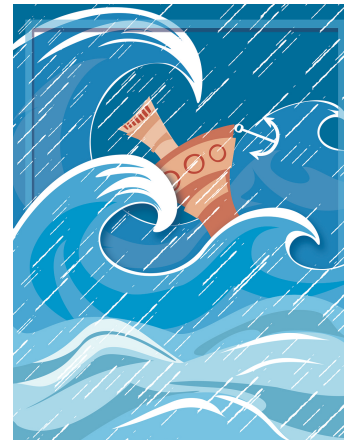
- meet the demands of the day
- connect and communicate
- go with the flow
- engage with life
- connected to Self, Others, The World, Spirit

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[illegible]

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Neuroception of Danger — First Pathway of Protection
We are in a polarized world, locked in a story where change is not possible. We feel driven, always seeking and never satisfied.



SYMPATHETIC *system of action*

- filled with chaotic energy
- mobilized to attack
- driven to escape
- disrupted connection to Self, Others, The World, Spirit

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Neuroception of Intense Danger
Path of Last Resort
We are lost and alone. Awareness eludes us.
Connection is out of reach.

- just going through the motions
- drained of energy
- disconnected
- lost hope
- given up
- lost connection to Self, Others, The World, Spirit

[illegible]

States and Stories of Safety

Safety is not a cognitive experience...it is an embodied one...



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Patterns of connection and protection are being shaped and re-shaped in every moment. We are not stuck. With patience and persistence, we find the way to a new rhythm.

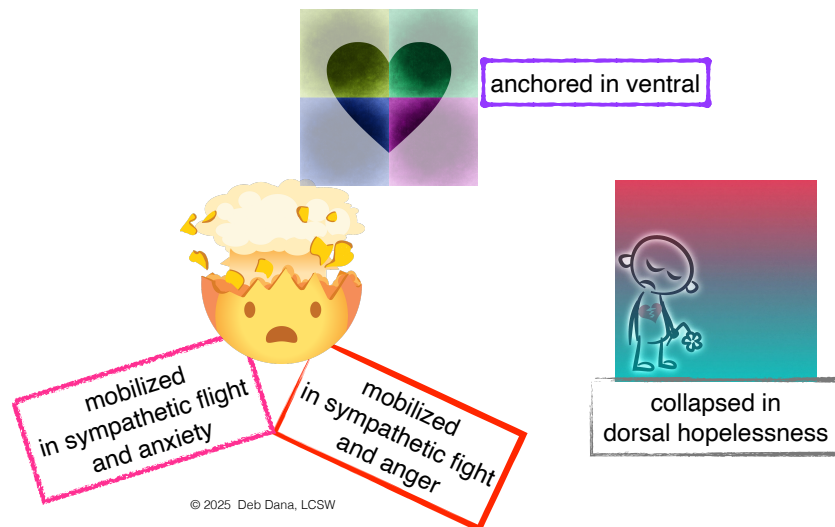
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What does the nervous system need to feel just a little bit safer in this moment?

What are the disconfirming autonomic experiences?

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Living in a Challenging World

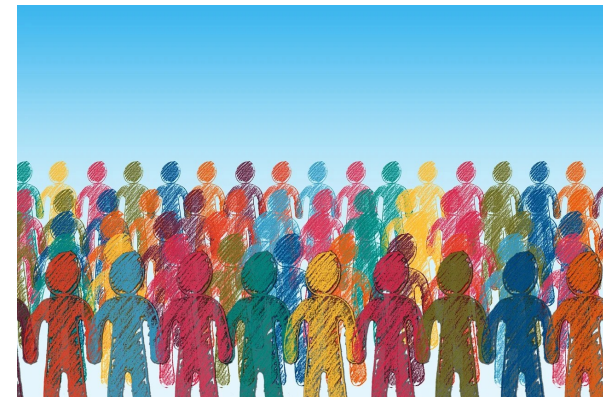


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Collective Nervous Systems



What messages are being transmitted?



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*“Earth will be safe
when we feel in us enough safety.”
Thich Nhat Hanh*



Hope Lives in the Small Moments

Extended periods of regulation aren't necessary to create new patterns. Micro-moments accumulate and shape our biology. They are fundamental to becoming a more regulated human.

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Your nervous system knows the way...

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There is no right or wrong way.
There is the way of your nervous system.

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Turn toward, tune in, and honor the wisdom of your nervous system.



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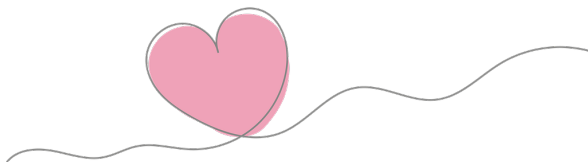
Building a World of Safety and Connection

The Ripple Effect

The scientific definition of contagious: something that is transmitted by either direct or indirect contact

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Ventral vagal energy is an unstoppable force!



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The Power and Promise of Ventral

For self: stand up for what you believe in; speak with strength; be forthright; navigate the world with purpose and passion

For others: offering your autonomically regulated presence to others begins to change their experience; ventral energy is “contagious”; see others as dysregulated

For change: anchor in the ventral energy needed to support having difficult conversations; create the critical mass of ventral needed to shape the world in a new way

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The Call to Action

Autonomic communication is always happening.

Our state impacts the world.

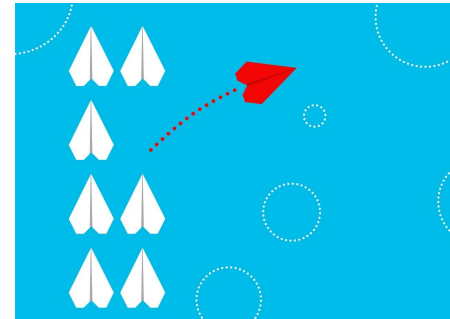
We are responsible for the autonomic information we are sending out into the world.

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Changing the World One Nervous System at a Time

Am I a resource or a threat?

Am I sending a welcome or a warning?



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Benevolence

The active, ongoing, intentional use of ventral
vagal energy in service of healing...

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