

Healing



Nervous System Regulation

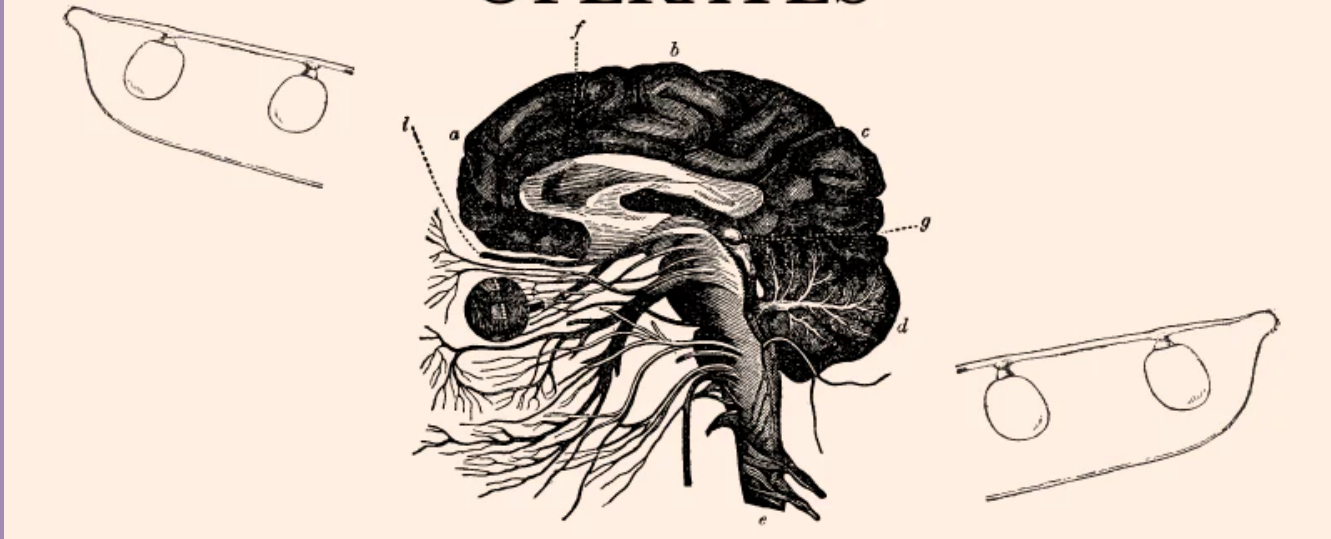
For those of you who find relaxation a hard place to be, it is because in our busy lives we are always "on" and on the go... we don't hold space to slow down. For others it can be that there is deeper trauma that has left our nervous systems to go awry. This is why it's important to review the nervous system and why it's essential to support yours. Along with key techniques to get un-stuck from "fight or flight" mode, or what many call "sympathetic dominant", into the parasympathetic "rest and digest" state.

I know it's not easy. Stress is addictive. Well actually, the hormones of stress are addictive. And although the hormones of stress, like cortisol, have an ultra critical function to our survival, like alerting us that we're in danger, or giving us enough energy to tackle the never-ending to-do list... it is of vital importance that we replace the siren blast of cortisol with regenerative practices that help us stay calm and well. Before we dive in, let's take a look at how the nervous system works.

**Your Mental Health, and Body health are
everything~ prioritize it.
Make the time like your life depends on it,
because it does.**



HOW THE NERVOUS SYSTEM OPERATES



Your nervous system is connected with every single part of your physical body. And many mystics even said it's the bridge that connects to our soul. The human body has two nervous systems; the voluntary nervous system and the autonomic nervous system.

The Voluntary Nervous System

Our voluntary (or somatic) nervous system is part of the peripheral nervous system which handles bodily movements. The peripheral nervous system connects the brain to motor neurons which control our muscles, glands, and sensory neurons, which are the nerve cells within the nervous system responsible for converting external stimuli from the individual's environment into internal electrical impulses. The good news is that because this branch of the nervous system is voluntary, we have control of it and we can use it when we want and rest when we want. A good example is using your arm to wave hello.

The Autonomic Nervous System

While the somatic/peripheral nervous system is voluntary, the autonomic nervous system is involuntary - it will happen without us thinking about it. The autonomic nervous system regulates the function of our internal organs, such as our stomach, lungs, and heart. Essentially, it keeps the show running without us having to do anything, even while we are sleeping.

Within the autonomic nervous system, there are two branches:

1. the sympathetic nervous system (arousing) (fight-or-flight)
2. the parasympathetic nervous system (calming) (rest-digest-heal).

The sympathetic nervous system provides the body with energy, stimulation, and fuel to take flight from danger. The parasympathetic nervous system is all about relaxation, which is essential for healing, digestion and restoration.

Sympathetic Nervous System

When there is a stressor or trigger, our body senses the ‘danger’, moving into a fight-or-flight response. With this reaction, our adrenal glands are activated, which stimulates the breakdown of the hormone cortisol. Our breath begins to race, our pupils dilate, our heart rate increases, we tense up... prepping us to take flight (or fight) in order to survive, defend, ACT, or freezes from shock.

Parasympathetic Nervous System

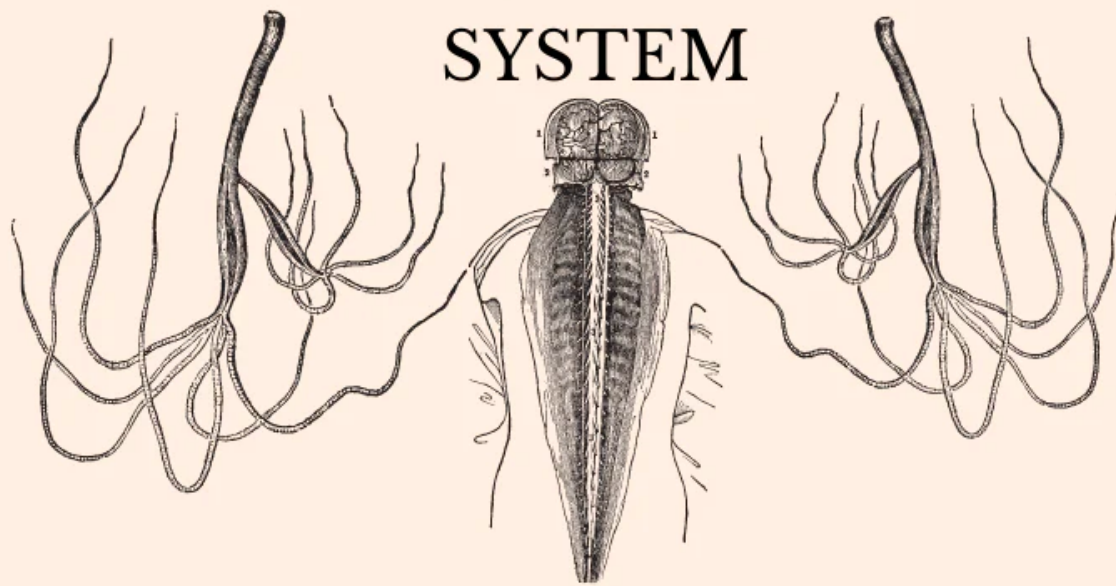
The parasympathetic nervous system is what kicks into gear during downtime, or at least what should kick into gear. This is the natural state our body should be living in when not in state of emergency or danger. Within this state, our heart rate slows down, our breath is calm, our digestion is fluid, and hormones are balanced. All healing takes place within the parasympathetic state; in this state of systemic relaxation our body regulates, restores, detoxifies, regenerates.

Signs that we are in a state of “fight-or-flight”:

- Tired (but wired)
- Not sleeping through the night
- Wide awake at peak hours (1-4am)
- Digestive issues (excessive bloating, constipation, etc.)
- Elevated blood sugar levels
- Feeling unable to calm down, or slow down, mentally or physically

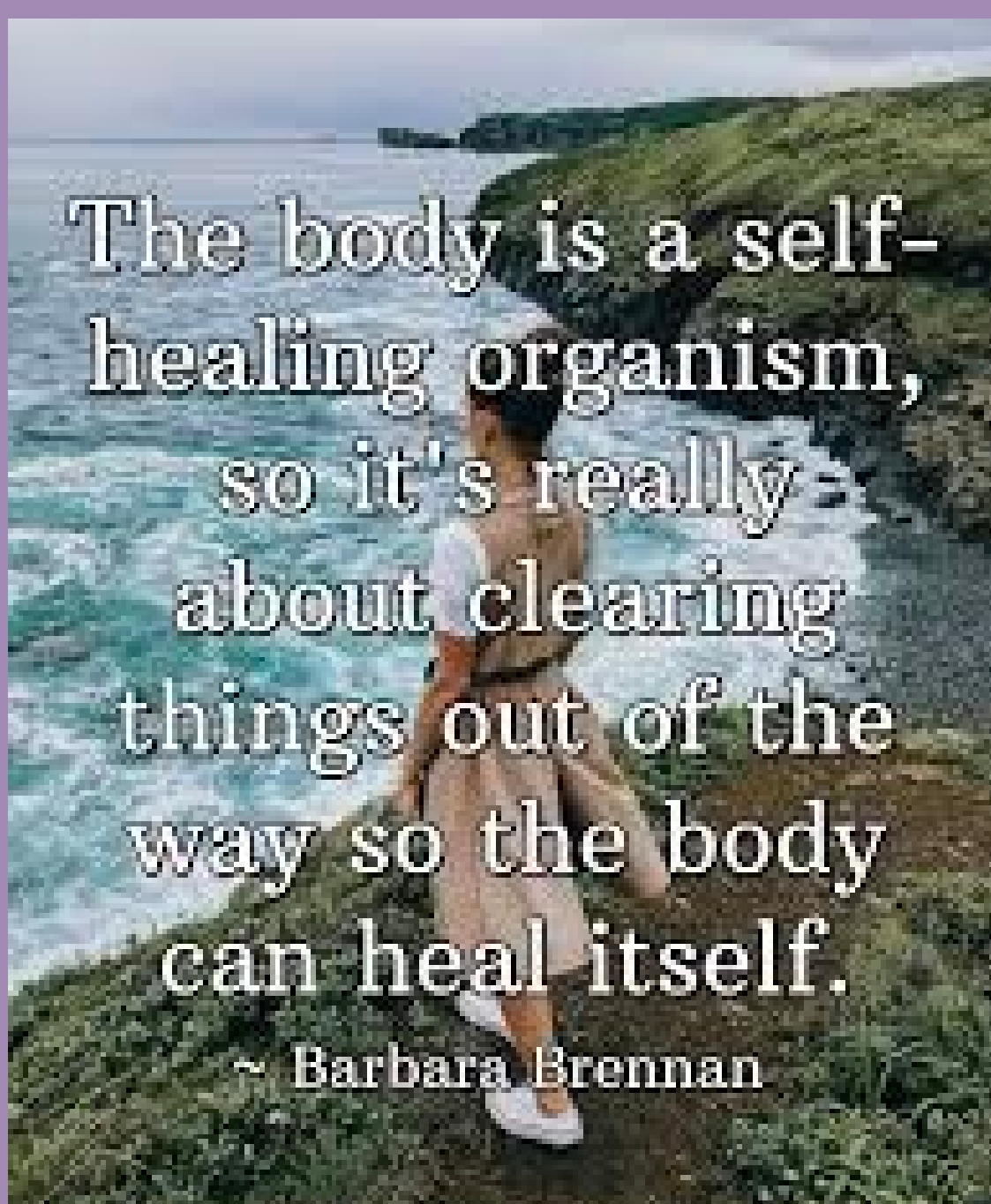


BALANCING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM



Our 21-st-century lifestyles have set us up to be sympathetic dominant. BUT! With some basic consciousness around it, practices and positive lifestyle choices, we can easily support our body back into homeostasis. While both branches are working simultaneously, there is always one that is particularly activated. We can become sympathetic dominant by working too hard, receiving too much stimulation from phones, over-exercising or just being mentally stressed in general (excessive worrying, anger, etc.)

Parasympathetic dominant, although rare!, doesn't mean that you are just in a state of meditation all day long. Some telltale signs are how you feel after a good workout or a massage. Those moments where you feel at ease, blissful, aches and pains lowered (or totally dissolved) and you can think more clearly.



Effective Practices to Begin Deeper Healing:

1. **Cleanse your Bowels**

Deep rooted inflammation is often lodged in some way in the gastrointestinal system. It's important that we keep the ecology of our gut cleansed, in order for essential biological processes to happen and flourish. Once energy remains stuck, inflammation easily builds up, oftentimes triggering anxiety that can look like inflammatory bowels, or even affecting our ability to relax and decompress. Try consuming liquids, soups or broths often to cleanse easily, and avoid processed foods (like commercial oil, sugar, etc –

2. **Nerve Tonics + Trophorestoratives**

These categories of plants are highly nutritive, and do much more than just provide essential nutrients. In herbal medicine, Milky oats (*Avena sativa*) for example, is considered a nervous system 'Trophorestorative'. Trophorestoratives nourishes and restores the function of a tired, compromised, diseased tissue, organ, or system. In basic terms it acts as a super tonic and works to restore and rejuvenate the nervous system. Other trophorestoratives that deeply nourish and help with deficiency are Nettle seed, Milk thistle, Goldenseal and more.

3. **Adaptogens**

The herb, Ashwagandha is an adaptogen. Adaptogens on the other hand, greatly protect us from multiple stressors by modulating our stress response during times of stress. Adaptogens greatly protect from oxidative damage and are very supportive to the adrenal, nervous system and endocrine system as a whole.

Rhodiola rosea, is for helping support physical and mental fatigue.

Holy basil, may reduce physical and mental stress, stress-related anxiety, and depression and improve memory and thinking.

4. Good Fats

Fat helps create a healthy brain and nerve tissue. In fact, fat is the main ingredient in the insulation of nerves and a large component of the myelin sheath that coats the neurons, which grants us increased cognition, ability to think and move. And, fat is fuel! Dietary fats are needed for the absorption (and digestion!) of Vitamins A, D, E and K.

5. Cold Showers

Cold water stimulates our immune system and activates our vagus nerve. This is the largest nerve in our autonomic nervous system and the nerve that connects the brain and digestive tract. Think of it as the communication highway between your brain and gut. The vagus nerve regulates our heart rate and our digestive system AND how each function. If the vagus nerve is not working optimally, it can lead to slowed motility in the gut, weight gain, anxiety, high-stress, and nutrient deficiencies. This makes it easy to understand the long-term digestive effects of stress, including irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), colitis, and SIBO.

6: Meditation + Breathwork

Five to twenty minutes a day of deep breathing through the nose is clinically proven to reduce stress levels, AND activate your parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). Did you know that the simple act of being in darkness, or even with closed eyes, already activates the PNS? Close your eyes and practice breathing exercises. Try the 4-7-8 breath. This involves inhaling through the nose for a count of four, holding for a count of seven, and exhaling through the nose for a count of 8.



7: The Sleep/Wake Cycle

The body's circadian rhythms control the sleep-wake cycle. They play a role in sleep due to how the body and brain respond to darkness, which is when most humans feel tired and tend to sleep. As darkness sets in, the body's biological clock instructs the cells to slow down. Changes in your sleep/wake cycle may lead to cognitive and behavioral issues, diminished focus, and memory loss. Stay as consistent as possible with your sleep/wake cycle, and enjoy the 8-9 hours of sleep if your body is calling for it!

8: Change Your Relationship with Caffeine

Coffee and caffeine-containing teas can be very straining and stimulating to the nervous system. Choosing less caffeine, perhaps change the time you consume it, or cut down on quantity. I LOVE a good cup of coffee, but when reliance becomes a regular thing, it's time to pull back a bit. If you've been struggling with anxiety, sleep, or digestive problems for any length of time, consider taking coffee, or highly caffeinated beverages, later in the am, about an hour after breakfast. Caffeine increases heart rate, blood pressure, cholesterol, and homocysteine. It also stimulates the excretion of stress hormones, which can produce increased levels of anxiety, irritability, muscular tension and pain, indigestion, insomnia, and decreased immunity.

8: Foods for the Nervous System + Adrenals

A diet which includes healthy servings of fruits and root vegetables can be nourishing to the nervous system. While this transition can take some time, often a few weeks to a few months, it can be very healing to the system. We typically advise against a ketogenic or low-carbohydrate diet if you are experiencing stress or tend to run a bit nervous/anxious



10. Music & Binaural Beats

Healing and relaxing music, in general, is extremely helpful to help us feel good and at ease. Although some say 'binaural beats' are a bit of an illusion, or 'auditory phenomena' I think they can be tremendously healing. There's many kinds out there, and there are some particularly great ones that incorporate singing bowls, and other instruments. Many guided meditations incorporate these, and many find it to be effective for meditation, or downtime.


11. Hands-on Healing & Bodywork

Getting bodywork like lymphatic massage, craniosacral therapy, somatic experience therapy, abdominal massage, reflexology and reiki are all therapeutic and immensely helpful at turning off your stress hormones. There's many forms of massage and bodywork out there, try exploring some out of the norm to find the one that somatically matches your needs. These therapies, and similar, can be greatly helpful in releasing stored trauma, emotional tension and physical tension.

12. Protecting the Nerves with B vitamins

Each nerve has a protective coating known as a myelin sheath. Much like the sheath of an electric cable, it acts as insulation for the transmitting nerve. Worn out myelin sheaths have been associated with imbalances like Alzheimer's, so it is important for a person to keep up their intake of B12 and fellow B vitamins. Folate is a B vitamin that protects the nerves from chemicals that can cause damage. This vitamin is found in spinach, pomegranates and beets. B12 can be derived from animal based sources, as well as algae such as spirulina and chlorella.



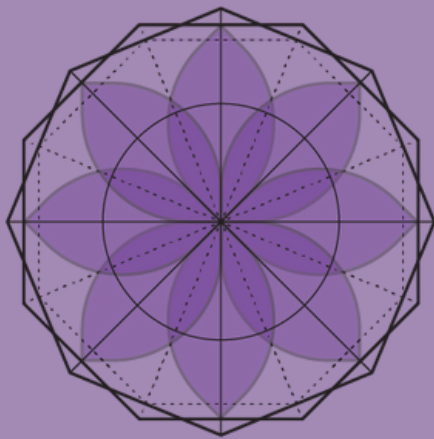


"if you just allow
your body and mind
to rest, the healing
will come by itself."

THICH NHAT HANH | @DWELLINMAGIC

These are going to be new practices and concepts to you most likely, and it will take discipline and daily practice to continue to heal. I promise you this, it will be so WORTH it. Regulating your nervous system, allows for deeper healing.

SELF LOVE= TAKING CARE OF
YOUR BODY AND MIND



L I F E C O A C H I N G

Godness