

## 21 Day Tune-Up: Day 4 - Build Capacity and De-Stress Daily

Day four. Build Capacity and De-Stress Daily. Now, as we dive into this video, and this is the main piece of learning for today on day four, you're gonna start to see some concepts being reiterated and reviewed. And this is for good reason. We wanna keep bringing back the basic learning and if you can recall, I talked about the 123's the ABC's of learning the language of the nervous system. And, so much of this comes back to building capacity, having more capacity in our system for the stressors that we are engaged with on a day to day basis, 'cause let's face it, there's always gonna be something.

And yet, when we build this capacity and we can bring on more, it also frees up and dislodges the old trauma that's stuck in the system, in the nervous system. And so, this is a very elusive concept I will be honest, because capacity is kind of like air, it's like water, it's clear, it's colorless, but we know it's there.

De-stressing daily to me is more than just the specific times when you set aside to do an exercise of mind/body or mindfulness, or maybe it's one of my neuro sensory exercises. It's this capacity, this ability to really feel our system coming down, when we're not consciously trying to bring it down. And, while this might seem cryptic or maybe this is a review, I wanna stress upon you, this concept is infused within my work, within this 21 Day Nervous System Tuneup Starter Course. It becomes infused if you should come and work with me at a workshop, we're always gonna be building more capacity, bringing more awareness on board. It also builds and builds in my longer programs, one of which is the Smart Body, Smart Mind 12 week program.

So, bottom line, capacity and our ability to de-stress is infinite. There's no end point. Okay. So, next piece. Trauma is not in the event, and I'll explain that in a moment. We need to understand what dysregulation is, and you've already had a visual of it in the Biology of Stress video number one, Autonomic Nervous System 101. So, maybe a memory is coming back to some images you saw in that video. And, I can't stress this enough: building up capacity is key. The more capacity we have to be with our internal environment, feel our sensations, notice our thoughts and then come back to the body, the more we can be in environments that are a little more stimulating and challenging and not become overwhelmed, we know we're on the right track. And this is where we have to have awareness and self-awareness to the process at hand.

So what actually is trauma? We usually as a culture who watches movies and shows where we see hospital surgeons doing trauma work, there's the trauma surgeon, there's the traumatic event. And that's all true. That's one way of seeing a trauma, like having a broken bone or something that needs to be fixed. However, in this world, of the somatic nervous system healing arts, let's call it, we see trauma as trauma being in the nervous system. So, trauma is nervous system dysregulation. So again, it's one of these things, it's kind of invisible. But what it does is it throws the system and not just the nervous system, but all the systems off kilter. If you can recall, the autonomic nervous system governs not just our survival physiology and our stress response systems, which we need, right? But when that system is on 24/7 and doesn't know how to come down naturally, do you remember what it impacts? It impacts all our other systems.

Our digestion, our immune system, our muscular system, our cardiovascular system, our reproductive system, our ability to have higher brain function becomes skewed and foggy, right? So, trauma is nervous system dysregulation, plain and simple.

So, the question is, what is nervous system dysregulation? And, this is one of those concepts where you will learn the layers of this as we progress through this course. So, I'm gonna give you a taster, a little appetizer today, when we get into learning more about the vagus nerve, when we get into learning more about how toxic stress accumulates and how our wiring was set when we were early in our years, so when we were infants, when we were in utero, you're gonna get more pieces to this nervous system puzzle let's say.

But for today, I want you to remember this, so if you can remember this up and down, ebb and flow, wave of a diagram, we would call this a sine wave in math. But it's basically showing the pink line going up, and then the blue line or that teal line going down. Up, down, up, down. This is a good flow regulated nervous system, where there's a stress, and then the stress is gone, and we come down. And then there might be another thing, and then we come down. And these ups and downs can be us going for a walk. They could be us running up a flight of stairs. It could be doing dishes, scrubbing a floor, right? Washing our car. It could be having a heated argument with someone or it could be having a real fun discussion with someone, right?

When we have a healthy regulated nervous system, we actually want this range to go up and down, we want it to have variability, right? If we don't have that variability, the system, it kinda stays stuck in a very sort of small window of

tolerance. So, we want this. What occurs though, if you remember this graph, I've taken the same nice smooth line, and then on top of that, this kind of yellowish, orange line where if a stress enters, we sometimes when we have more dysregulation on board, they'll be these spikes, right? So we can imagine a spike up as being this over reactive, hyper arousal of that sympathetic nervous system just going through the roof, and then it can crash, all the way down because it's too overwhelming, it's too overwhelming, and then boom.

And then it can spike back up and then it can stay up. We could make the imagination that that higher line where it just kinda goes flat as being stuck say in survival stress. We can't sleep, we can't eat, we can't digest, everything is just kind of in this chaotic up/on mode. As we know, with dysregulation and dysregulation that's prolonged, if it's prolonged long enough, the system actually can't stay up there that long, it's not efficient to stay ramped up. So, what does the system do? It drops really, really fast into those off mode, this stuck mode, and that's where we get that lethargy, that depression from a not just mental situation but a biological situation, the metabolism slows down.

So, just to remind you again, this was from that first Biology of Stress video from day two, this idea of a healthy, regulated nervous system, where things are gonna go up and down, cause we want them to have flow, but then this more chaotic dysregulated state.

So, trauma, I see it as sort of three pieces that really do talk to one another. Shock trauma, early trauma, and then what I like to call chronic traumatic stress. I'll start with the bottom one. The bottom one is that high level, go, go, go, always going, never fully coming down. We could say that this is the lives of many living in the western world right? We have to work long hours, make money, put food on the table, pick up kids, go to work, all these things that we do where really for many people we wake up in the morning and we go, go, go, until we hit the pillow at night. And then some of us just crash or then we lay there wide awake 'cause revved up, right? So this is sort of this chronic, really societal stress that so many of us struggle with and suffer from.

Shock trauma is those, you know, not basic but, that would be the fall, the car accident, that would be something like an assault, and attack, being yelled at, tripping and breaking your ankle. So, I hope you get that, it's these things that are a shock to the system, it could throw and it will throw that regulation off board, off that chart, I'm gonna go back ... Would mean a stress comes into this, it kind of

disrupts it, but then we want it to come back down, back to this kind of nice, sort of wavy ebb and flow format.

Early trauma is a little different, and I'm not gonna dive into this fully today, 'cause I'm gonna get into that in later Biology of Stress videos. But that early traumatic stress is what occurs to us before we even have a functioning nervous system on board. We have basics on board like let's say digestion, you know, babies when they come out they're very good at pooping and peeing and crying, and that's for good reason. It's 'cause they're trying to communicate with us that something isn't right. How that nervous system is nurtured and formed will be dependent on how well we're attuned to when we have these little dysregulations as an infant that is not developed.

So, this is why we called it developmental trauma as well. Sometimes we call it early, sometimes it's developmental, but they're the same thing. So, early traumatic stress is when that early time in our life wasn't that great, and it doesn't have to just be because of say adversity and abuse and misattunement in the household, it could also be surgical traumas when we were really young, it could be an early birth, where we had to be taken away from mom because we needed medical attention. It could be in utero stress, maybe mom was in an accident, and she had to fight for her life, and in doing that, you inside experienced all the stress chemicals.

All right. So, these are kind of the three ways that I see trauma and how this trauma impacts the nervous system into dysregulation.

So, again, dysregulation is not just from one trauma per se. Often this is never the case, at least in the western world. It's due to many little traumas or big traumas that get piled up. If you think of a cup of water, you keep putting water into that cup, there'll be a point in time where that cup is full, you can't put anymore inside. And, dysregulation is not always because of a specific event. Again, this is kind of a review of that last slide. Often it is this kind of macro level situation, where there's lots of little pieces and sometimes big pieces, all contributing to this nervous system just becoming chaotic, and not settled, and not regulated.

As I said, how we're wired starts from day one. So, more of that in our future videos, so I'll get into the early and developmental trauma pieces in future Biology of Stress Training videos. So, how do we build back regulation and heal trauma, right? This is why we're here. And it comes back to that piece that I mentioned a while ago around capacity. The analogy I always like to use is a swimming pool,

with obviously borders, 'cause you have to have water in a pool, and that pool has to have a structure. And so, there's usually this concrete structure that holds the water inside. Think of that like your body, right? And, inside the body or inside the swimming pool are these beach balls. And, what I like to say is, think of the stressors, think of traumas, think of the dysregulations as these beach balls.

So, for many of us, for many people, we have lots and lots of beach balls. So, in other words, their swimming pool is full of balls. Their body, the capacity is filled with dysregulation and traumatic stress. So, here's a visual, more simple, but this container that has different sizes, different colors of these balls, of these stressors. Increasing capacity of our nervous system, of our body system, means more self-awareness and awareness. This goes back to day one, learning how to orient, learning how to scan and be with the balls essentially, be with the stressors and feel them. That's really step one.

And to build back body awareness, we wanna do this via the body scanning and re-orienting, right? So, remember, if you can remember, our body, our system gets pulled out of awareness during traumatic events. So, when we have a shock trauma, an early traumatic piece or if we're chronically running, running, running, 24/7 on survival, we usually are not connected to ourselves and to the environment. This is why people get into accidents. This is why people stub their toes. This why people aren't able to remember what just happened, it's because there's so much preoccupation with the future or the past.

So, one of the ways again to build back this awareness is through this practice of scanning and re-orienting. As we get into day five, you'll learn more about following your impulse. And by that, I mean biological impulse. I'll save that for day five, so sit tight for that one.

So, here's that same pool, the same amount of balls, but we've increased the capacity, we've increased the ability to feel, right? To notice, to see what's around us, to pause. So, what that does, it frees up a little space in the system, so, in other words, if you look, these balls can move a little bit more, and we want that.

Working on specific traumas. So, for those of you that know, yes I had that car accident, yes I had that assault, yes this happened. When you know they exist, eventually you either will maybe want to work with someone one on one, or maybe as you go through this course and maybe future programs of mine, you might start to remember things because there's more capacity coming on board. When the system is so tightened up, it doesn't have space or safety to remember,

because it knows if it brings up these past events, there's no capacity to process it. I hope that makes sense. So, the more capacity we grow actually, the more we feel. The more we feel, the more we can be with the uncomfortable sensations that we've trapped, the more they're gonna show up, and this is actually good. I know that might seem strange, why would we wanna feel all this old bad stuff that we've held inside? The reason why is if we don't feel and process it in a good, integrated safe way, it will not come out. It's too scared to come out.

So, if we look at this diagram now, those arrows and the balls leaving, for me those are old traumatic stressors finally being integrated, finally being loosed up enough that they can exit. And we want that. And then interestingly enough, when we start to release things, we can bring in things that are good, and that's why I chose the pink ball as kind of a more vibrant, happy, we can then bring in good stress because we've let go of the old stress that's been kind of cramping our style for so many years so to speak.

So, improving lifestyle behaviors. So, this goes back to, can you pause? Can you re-orient? Can you scan your body? Can you be in situations that are a bit more nurturing, so that your system isn't going into these chronic day to day stress reactions. This all contributes to growing that capacity of your nervous system, so that it can have more space to heal. If we don't create the space, very little will change. And so, we need to continually integrate these practices into our life. We wanna improve our environment. As I just said, it isn't just about the foods we eat so much, and that kind of thing, but the people we're around, how we set up our day, are we always cutting the time so close that we're rushing, rushing, rushing? Do we not give ourselves time after we let's say have a massage or some kind of treatment session, are we getting into our cars and driving really quickly to another appointment, to another thing, and our system never fully integrates and takes in the goodness.

So, this is what we really want. If you look at this as a very different picture than the very first one where everything was crammed. There's more space, there's more options for things to go in and out, in and out. This goes back and this is that regulated system where you have that up and down, that ebb and flow.

So, nothing is static. So, this process is ongoing, it ebbs and flows. This comes back to what I said earlier about, we have infinite capacity, and with that infinite capacity in many ways we're always practicing this language of the nervous system. We also wanna de-stress in real time, so again, we might have old stuff, so much old stuff in our system, traumatic stress, dysregulation. It might seem

inconceivable to even begin to deal with all of the adversity and hurts and harms that we have experienced and survived. And, we kinda go, "Okay. There's a lot there. But what can I do today? What can I do today that is so simple but is actually teaching my body to release a stressor?" That could be that idea of rather than rushing day long, I'm gonna take conscious pause between transitions in my day to day life. That is real. That is something that we can actively encourage and have control over. So, why not do that, right? So we wanna de-stress in real time.

And we wanna practice when things are less stressful. As humans, we have this tendency to wait until it all goes wrong to then fix something. We know this of many illnesses and diseases. Often the signs and symptoms are there, but we ignore them often because we don't know how to listen, and we don't want to stop, it's too much of a nuisance. So, one of the pieces to this work is knowing that practicing something like orienting, being in the body, really should occur when we're a little better, when we're a little less scared, when we're a little more okay, so that we get used to being in our bodies when things are good, as opposed to waiting till it gets so awful and then going, "Right. Okay. Now I have to orient." I hope you understand that point.

It's the same with so much in our world. We want to practice healthy eating now, now when the doctor tells we have to, that kind of thing.

All right. To end for today, these three words: belief, intention and deserving. I have come to believe and come to see that healing comes from many things. It isn't just one thing. Building capacity, many things. The first being that we have to believe that we have the capacity to grow capacity. Very important. We have to have the intention to physically, psychologically, consciously, relationally, spiritually, drive our healing into good spaces and places.

The final thing, and I'm gonna link below this video an article that I've written on this, we have to not just believe and not just have intention, but deep down in our bodies, we need to feel that we deserve to have capacity, that we deserve to be better, to be well, to break the cycle of our familial traumas and all the old stuff that we've been holding on and maybe our parents and grandparents have been holding on. Maybe even our culture has been holding to, we have to do the big work of saying, "I deserve this. I deserve to break the cycle. I deserve to not self-sabotage. I deserve to have a brilliant life where I enjoy and have pleasure and goodness. When we've been brought up in a system of lots of shaming, toxic shame and telling us that, you know, we're never going to do it, we're not gonna get better, we start to believe that.

And so, there is a bit of a mindset to this work as well. And, this is where I want to bring this in. We have to really believe, have intention, positive intention, powerful intention, and then finally we need to feel that we deserve this healing.

So, be sure to check out the article and with that a video that I posted just below here. And, happy learning, happy healing, happy growing capacity, remember to keep going back to the basics, and we'll see you in the next lesson.