# Reverse Engineering Trauma Healing: What Your Environment Can Teach You About Recovery Transcript

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## Introduction to Nervous System Optimization

Welcome to the bio optimized summit. I'm dr amy, your host and we are exploring the next level of physical and mental health you can reach through intentional and targeted optimization.

Today I am bringing you Irene Lion and she is a nervous system expert and I am so excited to have her share with us, her not only experience but then her wisdom from her trainings and her work with many people and working with the nervous system and bringing it to a new level of health. And so she has been working with people around the world now And working to transform trauma heal body and mind and live full creative lives. She has online programs that have now reached thousands of people in over 60 countries. She has a master's degree in biomedical and health science and also has a knack for making complex information, easy for all of us to understand. Which is why I really wanted her to be speaking on this topic because she does break it down so well for us.

She has extensively studied and practiced many under the teachings of many of the somatic practitioners including Peter Levine Kathy Kane dr Marsh and she lives in Vancouver british Columbia where she um practices from and has developed all these online programs So Irene thank you and welcome hey there Amy, you're I'm so glad to be here and I just want to do one correction felt in christ so that people aren't confused.

## How Childhood Conditioning Shapes Trauma

Thank you. Yeah, he's long past but lives on thank you. So there are gonna be many people who are listening to this and they are not recognizing that they have any trauma in their life and they don't understand why something like somatic work would be beneficial to them.

So could you, could you break it down in terms of these these societal rules, these patterns that get established in our nervous system and we don't even realize it because it's on such a subconscious level, but they're influencing all of all of what's happening inside of our body, even to the types of diseases that we're developing and types of imbalances in our biology. So break it down for us Irene it's a big topic.

Um so I'm gonna start with the metaphor or analogy if you will just to put people into this mindset. So if we think about animals in the wild, right? Um and I'll pick a few like bears and wolves and bird, not, I'm not gonna use birds, mammals specifically.

If we were to be on the north american continent where you and I are, we've got, you know wolves and bears and deer, that kind of thing. And if we were to go to say Russia, there would also be wolves and they're not sure if they have deer there, but something similar. And um and and so what's interesting is that if we think of those animals in the wild when mama bear pops out her baby cubs, She treats them probably we can pretty much agree with this the same way Russia mama bear treats her cubs. There's just this natural biological instinct um granted of course, and this goes to some sidebars that the babies are fine, they're healthy. We do know that if a baby cub or a baby animal is born and it's severely defected, we know that the mother will leave will leave it and it's sad for us as humans, but she knows that it won't survive in the wild and it's better to leave it to die. Kind of a weird way to start, but that's the truth. And so um with these natural births in the wild with within that animal kingdom, there's no question about how do I take care of this healthy cup? You know, whether she's a Russian bear or a Canadian, they're an american beer, they're just doing it based on the innate and I'll even say unconscious wiring in their D. N. A. To lick to take care to protect, to feed, to defend, to teach.

And then there comes a point where they leave, you know, there's like okay, you're independent, you know how to do the things that bears do and then they go off and they do their own thing, there's no bear manual, there's no,

you know, school, their school, there's no book gulum what you expect when you're expecting for the bear mama, like it's just in them, right? You would agree with that. Yes.

Into their biology and it's not something they have to learn. It's just there, it's just there and it's fascinating when you really think about it, how it is really just there.

Humans were a little different, right? Um And I mean how I was raised is different, how my husband just sitting downstairs was raised to how our neighbors were raised, you were raised even to my how my parents were raised.

And this poses a real conundrum because we have in us the the D. N. A. The script, the biology that does know unconsciously how to take care of our little babies.

But we've gotten so far off that path that we're scrambling in a way to figure out the best way to raise a human and how you describe that because it really is like there is a part of us that knows how things should be. Yeah, there is.

And what's interesting is that like right now, in our society and our culture and our world, nobody wants to put the stake in the ground and say, actually this is the way that's not right, right.

There's always this, there needs to be both sides and there needs to be open, open, whatever you wanna call it. And for some things, I think that's important, but for something like the biology of the human system and ensuring that our young are nurtured and as we would call co regulated and get into that attuned to attached to our taught are protected are Fed are given the ability to rest and then learn right from wrong. It's so different in the human system, not just for the human collective, not just because of culture and religion and education and all the other things. But we got this thing up here called the higher brain and it's so complex. I don't think that we fully understand.

Absolutely not. I mean, we talk about how we think we know how the mind works and your plasticity works. And I think you and I are probably doing a pretty good job with our work. And I know that from the people I work with and we, me and you, we were both born into some form of conditioning some form of as as one people, some people say social engineering.

We've been put into certain situations that just don't feel good and forced to stay in these situations if we think things like school and so many things and um this higher brain gets confused because we know biologically internally when we're young, we need to stay safe because we're not mature.

And then we have a system that's that's kind of grooming us and prepping us for this world to be mature, functioning adults, at least in the in the Western world.

Um and it just doesn't match up with the natural needs of our biology. And I'll give you one example because I agree a lot of people will be like, I don't have any trauma.

And I hear that. I mean I've seen hundreds of intake forms when I was in private practice, like any traumatic experiences. It's kind of like a, it's almost like a bait question because if someone says no, no trauma at all, then I know usually that there is something, but they're just not aware of it and that's okay because we think of traumas, big accidents or coming back from more or you know, huge abuses and adversities and injustices. But really if we think about, let's say, um when were little and we have to go to the bathroom.

So we're old enough now to, to say mom, I gotta go pee or school teacher, I need to go and we're told that we're not allowed to because class isn't over yet or um busy, She's on the phone or someone's already in the bathroom so you can't go or I'm hungry usually when a kid says they're hungry, young and young enough and they are hungry.

No, dinner's not ready yet.

## Freeze Responses and Early Nervous System Patterns

We have to eat in these times now, many people would think, well what's the big deal with that? You know, of course the child was going to die if they don't eat for an hour.

Um, of course if they have to go to the bathroom and they don't get it, they're going to soil themselves and that is, you know, embarrassing and depending how that's dealt with.

So we have these interesting kind of rules and things because it's not even just conditioning it's like these things, it's very complex word things, but we have these things that we do that we don't even realize are and it's not harmful, but it is stopping that little human animal that is immature, it's stopping their natural flow literally, if we think about needing to urinate or defecate and the energy needs and what they're feeling in their body right here.

They right here, they've communicated that they have a need and rather than being met with understanding and a solution and they're being met with being turned down or or no, you don't right? That's another common thing.

No, you're not hungry. You're just saying that if you want attention, Like, I mean there's the mind games I wrote these down a little while ago, I don't know where they are, but like the things that we say to kids that we don't even realize how damning they are. Yes. And those become traumas because the child then feels very misunderstood and it's very confusing because inside of their bodies, they feel hungry and yet they're getting this message that no, that's not hunger. Well then what is it?

Right? Because they're not getting that that message of what it is instead. And so it creates this dynamic in the relationship where all of a sudden they feel very alone, even though they're still surrounded by their family, they feel very alone and that by itself for a young child is very traumatizing terrifying, like they know that they can't be alone. They know that they're not smart enough big enough independent enough to do life by themselves.

And so they have to, they have to conform to the messages that are being provided around them in order to stay having their needs met. But by doing that, they're having to shut down their own messages coming from their body very traumatizing.

100%. And the thing that's so interesting with humans because of this higher brain is we can dig ourselves out if you know that term like we can, we can then play the game in our own mind of like yes, I'm not hungry or or I'm mad because they're not letting me have what I need um which is ridiculous if it's something like going to the washroom, but we will then slowly over time these we will call, I call them micro traumas that are just what I also will call societal decencies, you know, like no, you can't do that. Um we slowly shut down.

We show slowly become what we would call functionally frozen and um yeah, I'll have to steal that when, I mean, I think I might have gotten that from Kathy K and I'm not sure anymore. These things all blend, you know, one of the more common things that we don't even remember as adult humans that often occurs in so many instances and it's starting to become a little more known, but it's the whole cry it out situation, a child isn't well, when a human is an infant and there was this thinking back in the day that you're not going to strengthen and smarten up and create a strong human if you soothe a baby when it cries, and there's still massive groups of people that are advocating for crying, you know, which I'm still surprised.

It goes back to what we said at the very beginning. Why can't we just make one rule? Like, not okay, not okay, but no, but that just, there hasn't been enough push.

But if you think about an infant, they are completely dependent on the parent. They're not, they're not functional in a social situation. You know, they're just not there, They can't feed themselves.

They know they're feeling something, but they can't wipe themselves. They're not, they're not living in the jungle where, you know, yes, you do just go and it goes on to the earth and everything's great.

Um, but they're, and they don't have the words yet to explain what they're even feeling exactly. So the cries come and when you get to know babies, um, the cries are different, just like an animal who barks and wines, there's a difference between a dog that is kind of not feeling well versus a dog that has been left alone and abandoned in the

house, you know, that because there's one the next door and it happens all the time and you know, and the owner has just left it right.

It's terrible. And so if you think about that baby, that infant there crying and then they're left in a room in our crib in the dark to sleep and their wailing, it sends out the signal.

First of all, I'm asking for something, I'm trying to communicate, no one's coming, I don't know how to deal with this body thing that I'm feeling because at that age, a human doesn't have the ability to self regulate fully.

There are little bits like the digestion works again, graduates a full term healthy child neurologically sound. Um their digestion works, their bladder works, their immune system is learning how to work all that.

Their motor systems are still pretty clumsy at that age and they can't take care of themselves. They cry because they need help. No one comes over time, that crying just starts to stop and that is the start of what we would cause it's not shocked, right? They're still functional, but they're they're numbing what they're feeling. Exactly.

And so many parents will think like, oh, you know, it's, it works because they stopped crying and they fell asleep not realizing what that experience did to the nervous system for that child and this is not going to be restful sleep for the child, this is going to be I fell asleep because I gave up crying for help and exhausted. And so this kind of helps us define trauma and what is traumatizing to, especially a child's nervous system, which is not only anything that happens too much too fast, but if they've had too little of something for too long and they give up because again, it's overwhelming to them, no one is there and so they give up and that's the exhausted sleep that they get. But it, it puts them in this functional frozen state, as you say. And how I describe it is it's setting this pattern for them to go into the freeze response with any kind of overwhelmed with even a little bit of stress in the future. It's like they've paved this highway that defaults to the freeze response in the future. Yeah, it wires, it wires in. And I mean every, every child is going to be a little different, you know, depending again, how, how is that parent?

It doesn't have to just be a parent to be a nanny, caregiver, whatever grandma grandpa, but how is that caregiver? What's the energy also like are they going in just they stop crying or they just laugh again. The bears analogy is so interesting because it just wouldn't happen that would never happen in the animal kingdom.

And so then we have all these babies and I'm of course generalizing that, let's just say are being left to not be comforted when they need something. And then, um, how that adult deals with their own discomfort will determine how well they deal with that.

And so then you have this infant wake up or, or you know, let's say they go quiet and then they wake up and they're they're whimpering and then, you know, they come, chances are that little one.

And I'm kind of making a hypothetical here, but there's their their physiology is going to be tense, physiology is gonna be um not that nice flow, mushy baby feel, there's gonna be a startle, a strain. And this is how we start to have our internal workings go off. Things like colic, you know, it's this problem, it's really a dis regulation of the nervous system.

It's quite simple when you go into um uh countries and tribes where babies are sleeping with their the whole family, not just the mother all on on on the ground or they're always with mama, whenever there's a whimper, there's feeding, there's these kids don't have these troubles, there's a great um, do you know the continuum continuum concept, jean lee loss.

So, I mean, look into her work, she talks about, you go to these tribes in africa and south America, no babies have college, no trouble, Children have trouble sleeping, no Children have trouble eating, they don't give a fuss.

And it's because of that early connection care. Exactly the same way you would give a cub a bear club.

## Somatic Work as a Lifestyle Practice

So um in terms of the psychology, which, you know, from, from my perspective as a medical doctor, your psychology is your biology, but whatever is happening in the nervous system, the nervous system is guarded, It's tense, it's in the survival mode.

And so that's where a child's natural psychology is going to develop of. I'm not sure I can really trust them because sometimes they're there, sometimes they're not there. Sometimes they seem to respond to my need and sometimes they don't respond at all. How do I know?

And so it puts them in this place where they're constantly trying to read their parents, read their parents nervous system in order to know, how do I talk to them?

How do I ask them rather than what would be the ideal of just being able to relax and play and not have that guarded defense or you know, feeling like you've got a second guess how you're going to do something. Like the relationship is just open and so trusting and the difference between those two types of Children and how they play is incredible. And then if you break that down to the cellular level and what is the difference between their nervous systems that is huge and yet like the one will grow up and be like trauma. No, I never had any trauma because they didn't see that as trauma and they don't really have that much memory of it.

They're gonna have a visceral feeling, They're gonna have a gut feeling of, hey, it's harder for me to be vulnerable. It's harder for me to trust people, you know, that's what they're going to have, but they're not going to associate that with, I had trauma and there's imbalances in my nervous system 100%.

And you know, if we think about you made a good example their home life and and not knowing what to expect, always having to be on guard. I mean, this is where hypervigilance comes in, this is where, I mean, I'm gonna say a bold thing, but most psychiatric disorders and vessel Vanderkaay talks about this, they can be traced back to something that occurred that wasn't right, that was scary, that wasn't consistent. So if we think about that bear analogy again, if you have to, you know, parents who actually aren't abusing, you know, they really are trying to do a good job, but if they have differing opinions on how to raise young, you know, one parent is the one that sends the kid to the room and the other parent is the one that doesn't that little one at that young age and I'm like 345, so confusing, it's like, oh, I have to be this way with this person and this way with this person because I don't get love when I do that, but I get love when I do this, that is the start of a very anxious, non trusting situation and it's so fascinating because most of our maladies, I guess you could say inter relational troubles, troubles connecting feeling or emotions letting things out.

It can all be traced back to how we either were or were not treated with that, that mama bear love really, you know. Um and it's it's sad because it's actually quite simple.

However, if you personally, if the person raising these Children hasn't done their own work to heal the stuff that's kind of invisible and they might not even remember.

It's a strange thing, it's like I want you to start working on yourself or something that you have no memory of, but trust me, it's there because you were brought up in Western civilization, all these things, you had two parents who have differing background.

I mean it's just it's a given given, there is something, there's something and I didn't think that there was something in my system and my God, I, you know, as as my capacity grew, it's like jesus.

Yeah, my parents were super good to me and there was a lot of conditioning that taught me how to do certain things based on what I saw based on what was okay, not okay. Um and and so it's like it's almost as if, and I say this often amy um it's there's no one to blame and everyone's everyone's right and so much bigger problem than just at the family level because the conditioning the programming started for them and from their parents and from their parents before them. And so this makes me think that when I have a new patient who's coming to me, I actually no longer even asked them about prior traumas because I realized that I get this blank stare and be like no.

And and based on what they're coming to me for if they have any kind of disease process happening in their body, I know that their nervous system has some part in that and that there is some imbalance in their nervous system. And so there was what we would call trauma that has been stored in the nervous system. And so what I have found more helpful to ask them now is in your childhood, was it safe to be you or did you get the message? You have to be this way you have to do this, you can't do that. Oh, don't say those things.

You can't express that emotion or or even the bodily function. If you burn your farted, you were sent to your room, you were punished, You were sent that lady like or you don't do that.

I mean it's something that a normal biology process and shame was attached to that. Yes, I mean, in in terms, I mean we're both females. So you know when you think about a child or a young woman who is starting to say men straight.

I mean the horror stories I've heard of what occurred when my female clients started demonstrate the shame, the pulling back. Um, as they started to become women, it was clear that the fathers didn't know how to be with that, them feeling that sexual energy growing because they are not sexually mature.

And so we've got this whole system that is so stunted and just letting the human being naturally express whether it's something like bodily functions or emotions or creativity. Um, and we've, we've just kind of put things like, well you can be creative when you go to art class and you can sing when you're in choir and you can scream when you're on a roller coaster.

But if you're going to do those in my house, then I don't want you here. Right? But like, and so we get, we compartmentalize all these things and um, you know, I've seen human beings be pretty crazy and pretty erratic in in fun situations and healing situations and we're not, we're also not like the animals, right? We're not, we have that animal physiology, our autonomic nervous system has that.

And then again, like I said, we have this higher brain that is not normal compared to other animals in the animal kingdom. Other animals. I mean, look at what we've created, it's, it's there's a reason why no other, um, mammalian system on earth has done that. And it's because we've got this complexity and because of that complexity, we're not going to fully fulfill, I believe what humans are supposed to do when we're living in that survival, right? And we're not, we haven't healed those early traumas. And that's also why I really love, especially working with parents because to increase their capacity to work with their own nervous system, to understand their own biology, understand these programs that are in their nervous system that make them uncomfortable with certain things, sensitive to other things and that's all going to be passed on to their Children. And so like that's a big point of intervention.

And I love working with parents as much as I can for that reason, because it really makes such a big difference for the child. It's completely, it's revolutionary. And you know, I was just looking at a question today in one of our forums, someone not able to be with the intensity of their child.

And, and you know, when someone has that question again, granted the child is healthy and there's nothing truly wrong, right? Like let's just assume that the inability for a parent to be with intensity is the inability for them to be with their own intensity.

And um there's this kind of mismatch where we think, oh, the child's acting out what's wrong with them and yes, there is something wrong, but the behavior is only the tip of the iceberg, it's the biology that drives the behavior, yep. And then, and, and again, this isn't the fault of the parents and yet it also is the fault of society.

If we can attune to what's going on in that little system then we've not done our job and then they're gonna freak out and react and it's not gonna look pretty.

And we were like where did that come from? But chances are the signs were there really early but we just haven't been trained right as as a human system to know how to feel that depth. Whereas um you know and other again other cultures to go with jean lee loves work.

It just doesn't happen. And I, my mother is from the Philippines. I've been to the Philippines and small villages. Their babies don't cry, Children don't cry. There's no tantrums, there's no trouble eating at the dinner table. There's none of this, Oh well you're gonna eat this and you're gonna know you're crazy.

It's like food is food, you eat it and it's it's true like you really don't see the level of distress in the village life, right? You go into Manila stay at a fancy hotel, you see it. So it also has nothing to do with them as a as a culture.

## Building Capacity Through Body Awareness

It's the different class systems and how when you're in a certain situation then you give this to Children, it's really interesting to to travel and see that anyway there it is, it's really and I'm sure you have a very good ability now to as well to read people's nervous systems even from our, like how they're walking, how they hold themselves, how they hold their Children. And there's so much insight that, that you and I get when we travel the world, it can be a little overwhelming to walk into a different culture and see, see the collective shame and the collective exhaustion that's obvious in their nervous system, just from how their muscle tissues are, how their nervous system has has formed their posture, their facial expressions, their eye contact.

It's a lot. It is and it's fascinating because we're all, we're all the same. Right, right. And, and that's, you know, it's always kind of a funny joke.

I had to take some blood taken the other day just for general medical checkup. And I always joke with the nurse when the blood comes out, oh look, it's still red, you know, and she kind of laughed and like, well if it wasn't then we'd be calling, you know, the news that something would be wrong and, but it's true because, and I've taught and different.

I've had the pleasure of teaching in different countries too and bringing the same nervous system work into a group of people who are brought up and raised by the by similarly and again, there's gonna be differences because there's programs and different societal expectations and you do have an essence that's different when you're teaching in ST Britain, we were just in Sweden last year to Canada to the United States, to the East coast versus the west coast. One of my teaching partners, Ilia, he's taught a lot in Mexico. Um And Italy and he's like it's just there's just a difference, there there's more openness, you know that latin latin culture just has that flow. And so you're working with not just the nervous system, but this deep to come back to your first question is deep programming that the word culture isn't even good enough.

Like I don't know what the word is. I'm sure someone smarter than me in anthropology and sociology could give me that word. Um But it's like there's so many factors yes that create a human system and all of its interest intricacies. And so then when we go okay, there's a problem with health, whether it's physical um emotional, mental relational, it's not easy to just say, okay well let's treat that symptom, right? Because that symptom can be in 10 different people. Let's just say a gut problem, let's say like trouble with food like I. B. S. Or M. S.

But the reason for it can be different in all of those 10 people. One person that might be a car accident, they were in one person because they had birth, trauma, they got yanked out a mama with Forceps, one person that might because of verbal abuse, One person might have been because they were brought up in a war to our country.

Um one person might be trauma, physical trauma death. I mean, it's just like, the moment you look at that, you go, well, we can't just look at the symptoms, we have to work at that root level, which is that nervous system, which lets talk about because for me, coming from conventional medicine, right? Like coming then into this somatic work was mind blowing for me and it has given me so much hope for one thing and allowed me so many tools that I now use in my practice, um in order to work with someone's nervous system directly and everybody has the same nervous system and this is the good news, right? Like, no matter what, no matter what, the stress, no matter what, the trauma, no matter what the event was, we don't actually need to go into that as much as we just need to go into the nervous system itself. And like you like to say, you know, reverse engineer what happened. And this is the same type of process that everybody goes through when they do the somatic work, there's not going to be, well, you have to go, you know, figure out from this specialist because you had that specific event. You know, like they're our principal principles for how to do this dramatic work, how to build this connection, how to even understand and

recognize the patterns, the programming that's in your nervous system when they come up and what to do about it.

So why don't you break that down for us and explain to us, like what even is cinematic work then, how do we work with the nervous system? How do we reverse engineer that?

And then, and then we'll finish up with helping people understand this isn't just a one time and done type of deal this, this is just a whole new way of living.

And for me like that really is the hope because everyone can then move into this place of being, being more authentic, being their authentic self living at a fuller life potential.

Everyone can by incorporating this type of somatic work that you're going to explain to us. Yeah, no, definitely. And I think um you know, there's interesting pieces to that. So what you said that will end with, I'll start with and then we'll end with it again.

But this is a lifestyle doing this somatic work and I liken it to um exercise for eating well, right, fitness and nutrition was what I did in my twenties before I wanted to work. You can't give someone an exercise routine and say just do this for two weeks and then you don't have to do it again right before someone come and say, yeah, I ate a salad five years ago and it didn't help me 100%.

And it's and so it's like that shift is still trying to be figured out in that realm, you know, I left that missing nutrition because I was, I felt like I was knocking my head against a brick wall because that the reason why people couldn't take care of themselves and be driven to be vigorous with their bodies and prepare food and keep their house clean and make up to get to appointments on time.

Like all the stuff that coaches would work with people on not a lack of of knowing or even behavior, behavior could be taught, But what happens at New Year's resolutions times?

Those behaviors are so exciting. I'm going about this new behavior which is really this new routine, which is this new exercise thing. But if the behavior is being tarnished by the biology that doesn't know how to internally motivate and be intrinsic, it's just gonna fall off and we know that it falls off.

I'm sure there's many studies that show the falling off of routines at the beginning of the new year. So, first of all, the nervous system, somatic work, it really needs to be a decision of this is how I want to work with.

My body doesn't mean you might not go see a doctor or a dentist or anything like that. You still got to take care of your stuff from that level. But the thing that I always start with with somatic with somatic work is actually education. Yes, and it goes back to what we said about 20 minutes ago, this higher brain, because if you have someone hypothetically again who's learning how to work with the somatic sensations while they're all somatic.

But the sensations in the body, the tightness in the chest that they know is what triggers their anxiety. That then triggers their guts to avoid too quickly and all these things.

If a person doesn't understand what that is very easy to ignore it and do something, do a behavior to get rid of that terrible feeling. Whereas when we really get into working at the somatic nervous system level and we know we've we've accepted. Yes, I probably had some bad stuff that happened to me either you know or you don't know it doesn't matter something happened that put your system into some form of fight flight or freeze.

And the autonomic nervous system there needs to be this apprenticeship of so you might notice that when you start to do this exercise that Irene or amy are giving you one day you might feel great and the next day you might go into full on panic and that's okay and a person, what do you mean? I'm gonna do the same thing five days in a row, I'm gonna get a different response, yep that's how it works because the system is fluid and it's cycles between parasympathetic and sympathetic and simplifying there.

But that's how it works. And so you start with education because if you don't um it's gonna be tough to keep going

when things get hard because it will get hard and how I like to explain to people is it's it's the decision to leave the need to always understand something with your frontal cortex and be willing to get curious about the process that's happening in your body rather than distracting numbing, doing anything that will make that discomfort go away.

We're gonna actually get curious about it and that's how we're going to use the mind is not necessary to try to analyze it and understand it because we're working with a very, I mean we're working with the subconscious limbic system that the frontal cortex will not always be able to understand, but but the principle is is rather than avoiding it and trying to make it go away, we're actually gonna lean into it and get really curious about it and see see what happens exactly. And then there's a caveat to that because if someone had a lot of early trauma like birth, trauma, creamy trauma, surgical trauma, mama was scared and when you were in utero.

So you got all her stress chemicals over and over. What we would classify as pre verbal trauma. It might be hard for someone to be curious, very hard.

And the next kind of step comes in is that there needs to be what I call a building of capacity. Thank you. Building of capacity is so tough to describe intellectually.

So I just said you've got to understand the theory and now I'm saying you can't understand this with theory because it comes with practice. So some of the classic things I would teach that I've learned primarily through Kathy Kane and her somatic practice work involves a lot of touch, a lot of intention, a lot of working with the stress organs like the kidney, adrenal, the gut, the brainstem, but also the skin.

## From Survival Mode to Regulation and Healing

The fashion. I mean, the interesting thing is everything is a stress organ. When we're under threat, the heart responds, the fluids respond, the fashion response, even the bone responds.

Um, and this is why we say that the nervous system drives everything because everything like the nerves go to every single little cell in your entire so you have imbalances there.

If you are finding yourself in that survival mode more frequently than not, like every cell in your body is going to be having this danger response. Exactly. And depending on the person, like some people feel things more in their gut, some people getting onto immune conditions, some people are more prone to mental illness.

And so there's this this interesting thing where again we also have this uniqueness. We have predisposition depending on our ancestry and what they were subjected to and how they had to cope with blah, blah blah.

And so here we are trying to build this capacity and it might be something as simple as learning how to just feel your body against the chair you're sitting on, right? You'd be surprised how many people don't do that until I say, what's it like to feel the chair under your pelvis?

Right? Or are you interesting that you bring up that exercise? Because it was at the last advanced training that I do did and dr Ian had as guide guided us through this exercise and that exercise put me in the freeze, right? Like just like that, you know, And so these are the types of things that that can happen with this kind of work is that you're working with something and boom, it's right there and there's you just tapped into some major trauma pattern in your nervous system.

Exactly, It will show up, it will show up. And so in an instance like that, you know, it's like, whoa to be able to then feel that, then go, put your, then you put your intellectual head on and go, whoa, this is a this is a shutdown response that's coming up right now.

I wonder why I noticed that all of a sudden my spring has gone off and I feel a little floaty and and then the capacity to be able to, okay, I'm here, but you can also talk yourself out of it right?

And again, this is where for those who are brand new here, they're gonna be like she sounds crazy what she's

talking about because when I work with my students, we take weeks and weeks and weeks and minutes and hours doing basic things. Expensing that, being able to connect with our environment. Being able to just put our hands on a joint and feel. And you'd be surprised because I, I could say I just put your hand on your wrist like that, whatever, it's no big deal, but when the intention is driven and the instruction is laid down in the way that it's taught with really solid somatic language, Polly vagal language, the nervous system, language when the teacher is in their own body as their teaching it, even if it's a reporting, I found it like pierces through yes, time and space in a way. And I'll have people say, I can't believe just touching my wrist made me cry, I can't believe touching my wrist brought so much joy, I can't keep touching my wrist, made me want to scream out bloody murder to my mother who held my arm too tight when I was done right.

And again, it's not about the wrist necessarily, but it's about the structure and then from that, I was like, okay, well, can you take that same intentional caring, direct tuned touch to your shoulder or your ribs or the jaw or your knees or whatever it might be and play with it because essentially when we've had, whether it's a big trauma or lots of these little micro traumas that we were talking about earlier. The physiology, the somatic system, it slowly starts to deaden.

I liken it to like a coloring book that has no color in it yet it's like there's there's no color and it's a little it's not even that sharp the image.

So as we build capacity were literally creating more solid lines were coloring in and we're bringing more vibrancy and vitality to the system. And as you grow capacity, people will often say, everything just looks so bright, more vivid, more vivid. And I can see the three dimensionality of what's around me. I'm not bumping into things in the same way I'm driving better. I'm not getting into accidents in the same way I'm seeing a danger come to me faster because I'm more attuned to my environment.

It's not a hypervigilance, it's the healthiness, a healthy and it's a healthy quality of our our spidey senses. Yeah, it's an alive nous. It's an alive and it's a protection. It's the same thing that that mama bear has those animals. They can they can sense things coming from miles away, right? They can tell when something's not right?

And we have that too. But because of that social engineering conditioning the programming all the societal decency, it's like we've just bleached ourselves out of that magic.

Right? And so part of the work again is working with the education building capacity working with for when I work with people because I blend in the face christ work movement because our movements get stunted and lack flow.

And we have, let's say physical injuries, but even verbal abuse will freeze us. Our diaphragm will constrict. Um and the ability to know that we can shift out of those constrictions, out of that body armoring, we don't even know is there? And a common thing that occurs and we start to soften the tissues, soften. Our autonomic nervous system, become more aware is, well actually for a portion of time feel more discomfort because we didn't even realize we had tight muscles because we were essentially anesthetized with the shutdown response.

Right, That makes sense. Yeah. It's very similar to some of the patients that I work with who are coming off of substances. They don't even know what they have been feeling because it's been all numbed out.

And so it's not until they actually stop and then it all comes up and they're so much more uncomfortable. And it's not because it was never there, it was there, it was just covered up. It was and that's what so many of us and this is kind of what I call living in the chronic free state is that we just kind of go through life staying busy living in a daze, not really fully connected with ourselves, not really aware much of anything below our head, right?

And we come home and we zone out to relax, you know by watching movies, by whatever getting on phone, social media and with all of that there's still all of the social programming that's being provided to our senses in terms of you're not this you're not that you're not as good as them. You're not as pretty as them your life isn't like them. And so we live in this constant environment that tells us that that were not enough and that only kind of perpetuates us living in that chronic freeze and shut down and I'm just I'm just getting through I'm just surviving and most people are just surviving and that's that's again you know it's kind of um I was reading some stuff on the Ace study. I don't

want to get too far into the adverse childhood experiences study and I think it was from the book scared sick and um robert and who was the co researcher with led on the Ace study he said when he finally looked at the data and really looked at it and he was just you know I think he's a statistician or something like that. He's like a doctor too.

And he's he actually said I started to cry and I just started to cry because everything that we think we need to fix you need to fix heart disease cancer addiction and there's a whole list of troubles. I mean he's speaking from an american perspective but they're very similar in other Western countries like it all comes down to he said childhood trauma and adversity but really it comes down to this regulation and the nervous system.

And I remember when I had my Aha moment and one of my training sessions um in S. C. With steve Hodgkinson and I looked at the graphs like with, you know, the parasympathetic being on the shutdown, the dorsal branch and the sympathetic and then they cross and that's where you read what we would call syndromes, which are these chronic illnesses, chronic anxiety, chronic depression era. And I'm like, what was 2008?

Never forget or 2009, I'm like, are you trying to say that basically every single wing of a hospital that's dealing with some kind of chronic condition is there because we're just regulated in our nervous system at that level. And he's like, I'm like, OK, carry on. But it's like sometimes it doesn't land.

And I think there's there were really an exciting time right now because we do know what's causing the bulk of our chronic illness talks about that. He's like, we don't need to do any more research.

We have all the reasons for this, right? It's like, we know why people are getting sick with these autoimmune issues, these cancers. I mean, let's just say we're eating a healthy diet and there's clean air and water and all that stuff, is there? Yes, if that's all there and the person is still sick then there's something going on, right, and it all points to that.

And so the beauty of the nervous system work is that you don't have to talk necessarily about the traumas. I mean, they might come up, they usually do come up. But if you do that groundwork, if you reverse engineers, I like to call it and you build capacity.

You teach a person how to really be with everything. What I've seen is a person system will intelligently start to release what it needs to. The memories will come up as they need to um tie traded way. Right that word.

Because again, a lot of the previous ways of doing trauma work was let's try to get it out as fast as we can right in in the most efficient way. Let's roll them in, roll them out, let's get them shaking and screaming and cathartic stuff.

It doesn't work that way. It'll it'll it'll pop back because you need to build that resiliency. The resiliency is what creates the regulation the capacity is what creates the foundation.

So the traumas can easily just slip out. Exactly right. And that's where a lot of the biological work has come into my practice as well, is realizing that some of these people who who either may or may not already have one of these chronic conditions have a lot of inflammation, but and even have some genetic imbalances in their biochemistry that makes the nervous system more sensitive than other people's nervous system and their nervous system because it's more sensitive or because it's being hit with all this inflammation internally, it's getting the message that there's danger and so we can be trying to do all the therapy and tell the body from an external viewpoint that everything is safe in our environment.

## Internal Biology, Safety, and Long-Term Change

But when it's getting that message from inside, the nervous system will still stay stuck in that survival state. And so for those people, it's been so helpful to do that biological peace rewire re work uh you know, restore the internal environment of the nervous system so that it has that you're a plastic ability and can make these ships with the same work because now it's also getting that message internally that aha everything is okay, I am safe. There's more safety internally. 100%.

And when that safety is on board, I was talking to a student of mine a few weeks ago, he said before, I started to get into the somatic work and he'll, at this level, he was trying to use his mind, his higher brain to change the physiology.

And there's a lot of evidence that that works. So we also have to consider the person's history and the state their regulation or dis regulation internally.

Said, now that he's like, it didn't work like my life was a mess. And then I got the somatic work on down on, I start to understand these systems differently.

I worked with myself and now that I have more regulation, I can use exactly my higher brain to change my physiology, but just as you said, if the physiology is on fire and it's chaotic, I mean, as Cathy again would say, I'm quoting her here.

The brain to her is an end organ is being impacted by the nervous, by the periphery, by the autonomic peripheral nerves. And we put so much focus on the brain and we should and yet if that biology is driving survival, the brain can't function. And so we've kind of we've done this flip right.

A lot of people think when they hear, oh, you're a nervous system, person that, oh, so I love brain stuff and I gotta go actually, I don't work with them, but I don't even think about the brain parts ever.

I never really name them. I'm in private practice. I might work with the hypothalamus and pituitary, but we don't even talk about it in my work because I'm just more interested in like this physical vessel that acting.

No, but again, hasn't really been implemented in the medical sciences yet. But we know this that 90% of the information flows from our periphery to our brain.

Not, no, not only 10% of the information flows from our brain down, 90% of the information that being exchanged is coming from our internal body, our gut, especially our skin, everything to our brain.

And so I'm right there with you when we talk about the nervous system. Yeah, I'm talking about this whole thing. Not as much this because it is, it's an end organ in the whole process. It is.

And I mean, also, you know, just to save our butts here, if we didn't have it, if there was brain damage, we'd be in trouble. Right? So there's this, you know, if you had a head injury and the role screwed, then yeah, you might need to get some osteopathic work to move those things around 100%. But let's just say that someone's brain is in the right place and there's no damage specifically. Exactly.

And um, it's fascinating when you teach someone these basics and they work on them. There's often this feeling like they're being gypped like because we've been taught that that the, that the healing the process has to be really complicated and really intense.

Yeah. And sometimes that comes out and it's intense and I won't deny that I've had my intense situations too. But what occurs is when the capacity is on board and our somatic senses are alive and we know how to be with our digestion were free to burp fart and sneeze and cough and all these things without saying, excuse me, pardon me and feeling ashamed. Like we can't allow our basic biology to flow.

It's gonna be damn hard to work on big horrible memories because we're gonna be so afraid. We're afraid of that we're going to be afraid of that, we might not understand that from a conscious level, from an unconscious subconscious level, if we don't know how to move our natural biology, it's gonna be hard to do these other things, which is why when we start with the natural biology and we work on it, it's almost as if the system, it might even be this at the soul level, it's like, it's it's cheering, it's like, oh yes, oh my God, where have you been? Where have you been?

And then it just starts to pop and ready to work ready for it. And I can't say enough about the person needing to be

ready, they have to be willing. Um It has to be from their own desire, not because their partner with your wife or their whatever is saying you should do this work. Um It's it requires a real personal um investment is really the word and I don't mean that by finance, financially, I have an investment to their future, commitment to the process of commitment to themselves to getting better. Exactly. And knowing that it's possible and and that is where a lot of folks don't if they've been living in this Unwell nous for so long, and maybe their parents, they're seeing their parents as well as they age and die.

They just assume that's an inevitability. Oh, it runs in the family, it's like we now know through epigenetic, that's not 100% true. Yes, that genetic, that genetic thing is there, but it necessarily doesn't have to be turned on.

And so there's also the brainwashing that we've been given that this is just you're just gonna die of this because that's what happened. That's strong programming, very strong programming. I've had to fight some of it with some of the doctors I've had over the past and it's like, no, no.

## Where to Find Irene and Final Takeaways

Um and so being able to understand that a we we can heal, the one thing that I find is a clincher for a lot of people is do they believe that they deserve it?

And that's something that I've been kind of dropping on my students a lot lately. It's like, yes, yes, you can heal everyone can heal, but at the end of the day, have you gotten to that hurdle of believing that you deserve it?

Because if we were brought up in a lot of shame, a lot of you're not good enough, you're never going to amount to anything. Even if that was the academic, just like the brain in europe last the transfers to the whole system, we might have this script in our mind um peter in the psychology world we call it Interjects that say I'm not that kind of person that can do that, I'll never be that kind of person that can do this and that psychology can stop the physiology from healing. Absolutely. I mean that psychology becomes your biology and your cells actually live that out and limit your ability to do something, limits the the availability of energy for you to move forward in life for you to grow in life.

Good. Well I mean I could talk to you forever so where can people come to find you and learn more about the somatic work and how to get started. Um My name.

So Irene lion, just like the town in France um dot com. That'll just kind of guide you to my resources, whether it's my videos, my blog post. Um And then I've got many free resources and I also have two online programs that are paid that um take you through really everything that I have learned thus far um to build that capacity.

Um Get into those organs that I mentioned, get into the movements, learn like really in depth education. Um Yeah it's all there. Um So if you if anyone has questions just email us.

Um Find me on social. Best thing is to not ask me questions on social but to send an email. Um and then I've got a group called healthy nervous system revolution which is a Facebook group.

Um got about 28,000 people in there and my team are in there answering questions almost everyday so that's one of the better ways to connect immediately.

Awesome. Thank you so much for joining us today and I'm excited to hear more of your endeavors and growth in the educational arena that we're going to collaborate on. I just know it so I'm excited for that.

You're so welcome to chat and go back and forth on these topics. Good. And thank you for joining us today. I know that you've got a lot of value and I really hope that you look at Irene stuff because it is solid stuff that I would recommend for everybody in order to help your nervous system get to a better place. And together, let's find that next level of health and aliveness.