## Introduction to Functional Freeze

Welcome to this interview on the Biology of Trauma Summit 3.0. Talking about the trauma disease connection. I'm your host, Dr. Aimie. And this interview is all about the functional free response.

And if you are someone who has no idea what that means, don't worry, I'm going to give you the foundation. And if you are someone who knows what that refers to you are in for a treat because we're going to talk about what it is like to come out of a functional freeze where you have been your whole life.

What does that healing journey actually look like? Now let me give you some teaching because you need to understand the freeze response. If you're going to understand a functional freeze response, the freeze response refers to the trauma response in the body, and there's a specific order in which the body goes into a trauma response.

And by the body, I really mean the autonomic nervous system. So I'm going to share with you a graph that I've created that shows the three different states of the nervous system and how the nervous system goes into that freeze response that we can understand a functional freeze response.

And you'll be ready for this interview. This is my graph that I created when I was going through my health experience where I was very deep in a functional freeze.

I would even say it wasn't so functional anymore because I was in bed, I was sick, had chronic fatigue, overweight and an autoimmune condition. And what happens is that I could tell that there were different energy levels and I started to map out my energy level based on what I was learning about my nervous system.

And so this is how I mapped it out. And then as I layered on more training, this is what I've come to understand about the freeze response and the trauma response in the body.

So ideally, we're starting in the parasympathetic though obviously for many of us we are not I was not at that time. I was either up here in sympathetic and stressed and we have to go there first in order to go into what is the freeze response.

And so when there is a trigger and it takes us up into that sympathetic state, this is in response to a threat, a danger perceived or real does not have to be real stuff that we make up in our brains, but we sense danger and we respond with a sympathetic or stress response.

And this is where there is a higher energy level. This is where we can feel the most alive and be our strongest. I mean, this is where we can become superhuman superwoman with everything that we can do and get done and accomplished because we are up here in this.

Oh, my goodness. Very high energy state. But what happens is that is unsustainable. And if the body is not able to regulate itself and bring itself back into a time of rest and being able to process what has happened, integrate what's happened, it will reach a point where in here I have my two points.

It'll be either too much, too fast or too little for too long. And the body has to shift down into a different gear in order to sustain life. This is protective.

This is a protective mechanism to help us survive, like keep our body alive and not have a heart attack, not faint. These are very physiological changes, of course.

We only recognize it more on the emotional level and on the level of what our body feels like. We're not recognizing

that this is a physiological save, but what happens is that our body, our autonomic nervous system, goes into this freeze response.

And this freeze response does not mean that you are standing there frozen. It can be a functional freeze response where we continue doing everything in our life and we can still do quite a bit as we're going to talk about in this interview.

But you have this sense of exhaustion, you have this sense of heaviness in your body. This is where you can feel depressed. You don't want to get out of bed in the morning.

You can develop physical health symptoms, some of which we're going to talk about in this interview, chronic pain being only one of them. You can have thoughts of what's the point.

And on a physiological level, your metabolism has shut down because your job is to conserve energy in order to survive. So this is the functional freeze response.

## How the Freeze Response Works

We're going to talk about what this process is right here coming out of the functional freeze when this has been what you've done for a lifetime, when you have survived as a lifetime of going in and out of that freeze response to just get through and survive, what does the healing journey even look like?

Because we can even develop physical health symptoms that are new as we heal. Isn't that interesting? So you are in for a treat if this is still all new to you and you want to learn more about the three states of our nervous system on my website traumahealingaccelerator.com.

You can come here and you can find the resources that I have for you, and you should scroll down until the resources section and there you will find the essential sequence guide.

So this is where I lay out and I do some additional teaching on those three states of our nervous system, and then the step by step process that we need to in order to walk our body out of that freeze response.

And if this is all new and you may want to start with this guide the steps for Identify and Heal Trauma. Again, talking about the three states in the nervous system here and what trauma is and how you can identify it.

And I have a quiz, an assessment guide in here. So those are your two guides that will be helpful for you if you're just starting out and not sure about the three states of the nervous system yet or this functional phrase.

And with that I I'm super excited to share with you that I have Irene Lyon to go over this conversation with me in this discussion point. Now, Irene is a fantastic person now.

I'm so excited to go over this conversation with Irene Lyon today. Irene is someone that I consider one of the top nervous system experts, and the work that she does is quite incredible because of the different trainings, but also because she continues to be a student of her own journey.

As again, you will learn in this interview, she teaches people around the world how to work with their nervous system, to transform trauma, heal the body and mind, and live all creative lives and today, her online programing classes have reached over 9500 people, 9500 people in over 90 countries.

Irene has a master's degree in biomedical and health science and also has a knack for making complex information understandable so that you can walk away understanding.

This is what's happening in my body and this is what I can do. She has extensively studied and practices the works of Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais, Peter Levine, Cathy Kane and in her free time she can be found walking the beach, eating good food, and even going to a place where I would spend some summers in my childhood up in Hope BC

Canada.

And with that, let's jump into this interview and talk about functional frees and what the healing journey really looks like. Irene One of the things that I absolutely love about you, first of all, you and the work that you do is you are continuing to study your own healing journey and then share that with others.

And we have come to know just how nonlinear this healing journey is, that there's not this end date that that you might be able to expect if you go to the doctor and we get to the end of treatment, and then they say, okay, you're done, you're you're all done.

There's there's nothing else to do. And you talk about this functional phrase, and I find so many people are living in a functional phrase I write, I have lived so much of my life in a functional.

And so I think it would be so helpful for people, even though this will be a more advanced conversation than just the person who's starting out with the trauma work.

It's so important, I think, for people who have already started the work to understand what is the functional phrase, how would they know of their in the functional phrase?

And then we can start to peel back the layers of what it means to come out of a functional freeze. So start us off. Like what? What what would you how would you describe it?

And how would someone know like, oh, that's me. Well, if I be. If I'm really bold and I'll be bold. You are always bold. Yeah, I would. I would wager if I was a betting girl, I would bet that the bulk of folks living in what we would call Western society, however we want to name that where we have houses and heat and running water and we have to work jobs that make us get up before the sun.

And we have to feed our children when we really don't feel like it. But we have to. All these things, you know, most of us are living in some form of functional phrase.

Now, I generalize, but I am now almost on the other side of this. And I was and we've talked about your journey and it's like, yup, you certainly have been and all those things going through medical school.

And I'll tell you what I found out about me and then I'll talk a bit more about this. I was in my somatic experiencing training and I think the second year down in Carlsbad and I was at the beach and I was outside having some sun.

And so beautiful. And I started to feel these tingles down my legs. Like, what? What is that? Something biting me stand. Please are having a stroke, like what's going on?

And I got in my car and drove like I was planning to go have a session with one of our assistants and see such an AC session. And as I'm driving down that highway, I'm still feeling these.

It's almost like water was coming down my legs. And I get to her office and La Hoya and I said to her, My Drew, something's weird. Like I keep feeling these things and I don't know if I'm okay or what this is.

And she just looks at me straight in the eye. Aimie It's like, Honey, you've been in functional for years your entire life. This is you waking up. And I was like, I don't remember if I cried or laughed or just was in a bit of shock.

This was already after beginner AC training, intermediate AC training, and I think we had just finished the first advanced I had been through Feldenkrais training, traveled the world.

I have two science degrees. I was a very accomplished kid. All these things, this is all the clue, a functional phrase I was going to say right? Wow, you've done a lot in your life. That's crazy.

All my surgeries and injuries and I used to paraglide and jump off of cliffs skiing and all these things. And I went,

Oh, okay. I didn't realize in that moment that would have been like 2009 ish, how much more I still had to do to get myself into regulation.

Now, bear in mind, I was never the person that had autoimmune or gut problems. I always slept well. I had relationships I didn't have. Always the best relationship.

Yes, that's one clue. I got into a relationship. It wasn't abusive, but it just wasn't the right fit because I was living in a functional freeze. So that was 2009.

It is now 2023. I can't do math in my head, but that's a good chunk of years. And I would say each year from then up until just this week, there are still layers of this functional phrase coming out.

Now, if we think about Phi Phi phrase right, like Tiger, we use that example. The tiger's chasing you. Not that that really happens very much here living in the city, but I definitely came across bears and cougars living in the mountains.

So that happens. Heart rate goes up, you feel the stress. You know, you can't socially engage with that bear. So the best strategy that no vengeful vegan is going to help you there.

So I'm not going to fight it. Cougar. You would you would fight actually you have to scream and get really loud and that music. Right. But you usually would flee.

But let's say you freeze that's probably not going to end well. So think about it this way. Humans technically aren't walking around in a freeze state where they're just I mean, we see some people that have that look all right.

And you can see it in the eyes. You can see it in the affect. But they're still driving. They're still cooking food for their kids. They're still going to work.

They're still cleaning themselves. They're paying their taxes. They're not in true freeze. Right. Because true fears would be completely frozen, frozen.

Paralyzed, not doing anything. Exactly. So we can't as humans live like that. So what happens? Because I think this higher brain of ours can micromanage the situation.

We can compartmentalize that survival, stress and just keep going. It's the same reason my classic example with my students is you stub your toe really badly on a coffee table.

How many of us keep going and curse the coffee table and are limping and limping and then we're disoriented. We're putting ourselves into a bit of a we can say functional freeze to just keep pushing.

So think about human life from birth to what we typically do with babies. I know it's changing, which is a good sign, but still, for the most part, babies aren't given to Mama right away, not skin to skin.

There's taken away and swaddled up and put in a warm thing and you know, to baby or infant has their first accident. They fall, they're crying. How many parents come up and say, You're fine, get up, get up, just keep going.

And this child is like, Well, I'm not fine. I hurt, I feel the pain. But you're telling me I'm okay, okay? I guess I'll keep going. And this is clearly what you want me to do.

Exactly. To be this. You want me to do this? Exactly. And because let's say at that age of four or five, we're starting to make sense of the world. The kid is like, okay, I have to be good because this is my connection.

This is my survival. I better put myself into this place and they don't know it's functional. Freeze, but little Johnny is going into functional freeze when he wants to wail and cry and okay, I better.

Better hold it in. We've seen kids do that. I mean, I know I did that. My first accident, I broke my arm, you know, went over my handlebars. I was age five and the the friend I was with wouldn't help me.

So I had to like, suck it up and walk up the street with a broken arm, like all of these things. So that's how you talk about how the brain micromanages a situation.

And it sounds like it not only compartmentalizes it, but it's able to disconnect from that compartment. Yes. And say you need to be put on pause. I can't pay attention to you right now because this thing over here is more necessary for our survival.

I have to get home. It doesn't matter if I have a broken arm. It doesn't matter like I have to get home because that's my greater drive for survival and it can completely cut us off from that compartment.

But then, I mean, in that compartment, stay cut off, stay disconnected.

## Recognizing Functional Freeze in Daily Life

And we just accumulate more and more disconnected parts of us along our lifetime, essentially. Yes. And, you know, I think it's a it's a it's a large piece to offer to someone who's never considered this.

And they're like, oh, my gosh, I never cried. Like, the people that say it's very hard for me to cry, that's a very good sign that that functional phrase, this functional phrase ruled their life.

Now, of course, there's some people that will say, oh, my God, I can drop, cry at anything. And so I would say, okay, well, that shows but but you can cry at anything that also shows that there's a little bit too much activation and things are overflow going in the system.

There's too many pieces that have been stored inside the you can say the lion needs to be let out of the cage. Right? It's needing to get out. And so, you know, there's no one definition, I think, for functional phrase other than it's just how we coped and managed and how we've created the better everything that we've created on this planet, you know, there needs there's been a push, there's been an overworking.

It just all of these pieces. And so in many ways, it is how I think humanity just is. We function. We have functions. Functions. And I say that with air quotes in this breezy survival stress states.

But what occurs is there comes a point where the system can't handle all these pieces that are inside anymore. And then this is often, Aimie, and you know this and many of the people watching this, that's when a massive symptom pops up or that's when an autoimmune condition pops up or a cancer or a heart something arrhythmia or a gut thing or absolute fear.

That makes no sense. The first time I realized how serious it was for me, I was driving through the city of Vancouver and I have no trouble driving. I love driving.

I've never been an accident, but I was going over a bridge and I have no fear of heights. And I started to have a panic attack like, where is this coming from?

Like so bad that I had to, like, loosen my clothes, take my shoes off because I was sweating so hard, rolled down the windows. I managed to get my husband on my cell phone to talk to me.

So I wouldn't I don't know what would have happened. I got over the bridge. I got off onto the side street. Actually, it took me 2 hours before I drove back home and I did go to the hospital because I'm like, this is not like me.

And he actually made me and they did a stress test and they're like, Your heart is completely fine or you're healthy. I'm not sure what, what, what, what?

It was my senses, my system felt being trapped. I was a little rushed to get to where I was going. So little more stress trapped and knowing my history.

It mimicked times when I was trapped physically in small spaces as an infant, as a child. And it was just one of these little hidden layers that we were just talking about that it doesn't it doesn't ask for permission.

It doesn't say, okay, today we're going to release this. It was the perfect storm. We would call it declarative memory, like memories, the somatic sensation, all these things.

And the system was like, we're going to express the high level of activation that you probably felt when you were an infant, but you couldn't do anything about it.

I probably went into shutdown as an infant in the case I'm talking about, and I obviously survived because I'm still here because some infants don't when they're left alone too long.

But this was just more of an oops on my parent's part and it came out as an adult. And that was like the piece that opened the dam. It was about five years ago this occurred, and since then these blips of sympathetic activation, my guts done weird things and I have a good guy like this doesn't make sense.

I had acid reflux for like three weeks. That made no sense. But you see, the interesting thing is that if a person doesn't understand their physiology, they might go to the doctor.

And what are you given? I forget what they're called. They said, yeah, to block the acid, but that's not what you need. This is just the system is in dysregulation momentarily trying to figure itself out.

And so knowing what I knew, I'm like, okay, this isn't a gut problem persists. I've never had a gut problem. This is my system figuring out a new level of regulation because it was just released, this mass of ball of survival stress that makes sense, makes a lot of sense.

And when I think of the functional freeze, the more that I have encountered the different layers and we're going to definitely talk more about this, I have had more and more compassion for myself, for how much I was able to do.

While. In a functional freeze. And I don't remember having that level of compassion for myself when I first learned about the trauma response and I learned about the freeze response.

And I was like, Oh, I, this is me. It was more just a level of recognition. But then as, as the layers have continued to surface, every layer for me just gives me a new layer of compassion for all that I was able to accomplish while having all of these different compartments of myself completely disregulated and cut off from myself until they were just as like little piece of me.

But boy, was she running and working hard to get everything done. Yeah. And what I hear you saying is that the healing journey is not cannot be planned now.

So it's not like we can have a checklist of, all right, these are all the events that happened to me. I mean, like, let me start with childhood. These are all the events that happened to me and I need to go through each one and we're going to schedule them out.

We're going to work on this one this month. Then we're going to practice. It sounds lot like a result, like a root canal. There's not a step by step list and there's.

Not a step by step list, nor is there a timeline. It sounds like the work is creating the environment. For. Those memories and those compartments to feel safe to open up.

And you don't even realize the layers and all the layers that you have when you first start this journey. No. And I think this is where each journey is unique.

It has to be because from what I've seen and this comes down to a person's resources and ability to have time and sorry for the single moms that have five jobs and don't have time, the chances of your system really letting out the functional phrase pieces, it's it just won't happen until there's more space and capacity because the unconscious and I don't know if it's of the unconscious mind or the autonomic system, but somewhere God or who knows something, it will not let your system pop out a layer unless it knows there is space for it to occur.

Can you say that again? Because that is so important? I'll try. The system will not bring up a layer. It will not pop out a bottle of old stress. And I'm going to say typically because there's obviously exceptions to everything, but it typically won't offer you on a platter this massive dragon of a trauma to work with if it knows you're not going to have time like that bridge example.

Like I didn't need to be at work that day. I, you know, I was actually going to get my haircut, you know, it was nothing insane. And I was able to take time to rest after that.

And I also had a supportive husband. This would not have happened when I was in my first marriage where I wouldn't have had help. And I think my unconscious system knows that.

It knew that. So this is where it's almost it's like it's almost like a bit of a tango, a dance between, okay, I've got a billable capacity of some knowledge.

I'm big on people learning about what their system is, how it works, and all the weird things that might occur. Right. And when the sister knows and there's obviously the practices of learning how to subtle learning, how to orient, learning how to feel the ground and have containment, less exercises and all the things that you and I and our colleagues teach as these resources are built, as the capacity is built in your human system.

And as you learn more about it and as you say, yes, it's really an intentionality of I would like this to change and I would like to heal. Then we can say it starts to tick over a little quicker, but and again, this is where awareness and wanting it is super important.

Someone who has no idea that they have a nervous system and has no interest in knowing they have a nervous system and doesn't want to work on the old stuff because they were fed the lie that it happened in the past.

It doesn't matter anymore. Like that's fine. Now that person will probably not do the work to restore full regulation to their system. And as we know and part of the summit, they'll probably get sick.

There will be a disease that that takes them makes them sick. You know, how many people do we know who just say they just died of old age? You know, someone asks, Oh, the person died or How did they die?

They expecting it to be a heart attack, a cancer, a dementia, something like that, right. And so this working of getting out a functional phrase, working on our traumas, working on all the layers, the education that it takes to do it.

It's like this parallel that's occurring with other individuals who are interested in it. But if you're on this path, it's almost like, I don't know, like, do you think you could go back and be ignorant to all these things now that you know what?

You know, my sense is probably not. I mean, once you see this, you can't unsee it. It's impossible to unsee it. And if you try to unsee it, I'm going to again rage against the light internal conflict, be very conflicting and that will breed more illness because, you know, you should be doing something and you're not.

Exactly. So there's some other parts that I'd like to talk about in terms of functional phrase, but I'll pause there to see if you have any afterthoughts on that.

## Healing Layers and Unexpected Symptoms

So my question for that is around the awareness and not even wanting it and and not having the space for it. And what I hear when I hear you say that is the more that we go on our healing journey and connect with our body, become what I call becoming the expert in your own nervous system.

It's it almost sounds like what you're describing is that I can trust the process, that I don't have to go digging for. Okay. What's the next thing that I. That I need to work on?

Yeah, it's just me. Living my life. Me dove into my hair appointment and just in the process of me living my life, then the thing that is ready for healing will surface by itself.

I don't need to control that process or even try to look for the next thing to heal. I think it depends. So I agree. Yes, I agree with that, especially when let's say a person's functional freeze happened pre-verbal.

So the the the wiring for that if you will started in utero. It started even before conception. And the parents and obviously we know that accurate and you've done interviews with people on that so that's a real thing.

But let's say someone knows that they were a preemie. Let's say someone knows that they were abused. Let's say someone knows they had a horrific surgery, whole event, an accident, shock traumas, broken bones.

There isn't anything wrong. I think we're putting out into the the the field. I want to resolve this if I think about what what tipped off some of my freeze starting to come off the layers it was doing some body work.

I was getting regular, raw things. Cranio sessions with a really good skilled practitioner actually. He actually did the first training with Peter in Vancouver back in like the nineties back in the day.

So he also had the trauma lens on board and I'll never forget he was working on my skull at one point and I said to him, I said, I feel like you're doing surgery on me right now.

Was like, Well, I kind of am is working with all the bones and, you know, all the fluids and and the posture. And that opened up something that brought me through the last five years.

And I'm still working on it. Of all the times I was concussed and had whiplash, which are countless from my sport. And I didn't realize until after that session how much dance stuff I was holding.

And I had already done years and years of Feldenkrais and other body work. But for whatever reason, and this was about five years ago, it was time. And so some of the layers can be intentionally like, okay, like I know there's something basically for anyone that's had accidents and you didn't have body work afterwards and you didn't really rest afterwards.

There's there's probably some old tension force vector patterns, fascia that is so gripped that you actually don't feel any pain. And here's here's the clincher.

When when you start to unravel these layers of phrase, you will feel pain and and it sucks. It sucks so bad because you just want it to go away and you go, Why don't I open up this can of worms?

But here's the thing. You don't want that tension trapped in your fascia, in your bones because it's going to limit your ability to move, which eventually will limit your ability to be independent, do exercise all the things.

So I wanted to put that in there because it isn't just panic that a person might feel or in society or activation, it can be this or a gut problem, not a problem, but dysregulation in the bowels, an immune system that might go haywire for a while.

It can also be the bones. The faster the muscles, the tension patterns that honestly going and trying to get massage. When you have these pain patterns, in my experience, it might soothe you in the moment, but it just it just snaps back.

You have to work with the activation. You have to work with the grief, the sadness, the anger, the loss, all the things that would have happened in that accident, but also all the things that didn't happen after the accident.

My mother never cared for me. They made me go to school even though I was so much in pain, you know, I just it's kind of this endless, we can say path of all the things that never happened, that when you intentionally go into it as an adult, be prepared for not just maybe the physical pain, but the emotional holding that never got to release.

And that's good. You want that stuff to come out. And these are things that you don't always know what all will come out. No. Part of the healing journey is what I'm hearing you say, is that you need to be open to your body doing some strange things that you don't understand.

Yeah. Yeah. And that's, again, where education is so, so pivotal, because if you do not know that this is what that might be, and I'm not saying don't have pain killer if you need to you know, I I've taken my share of Advil.

You know, I've I've rubbed my share of Tiger Mom on things like sometimes you need a little bit of support, sometimes you need that hot bath. Nothing wrong with that kind of thing.

Nothing wrong with getting some soothing body work. But you've got to process the energetic, the emotions, the survival, stress, the abandonment, all the things that might go in conjunction in parallel with, say, that one accident or in my case, it was nearly two decades of shock traumas that just I just kept putting myself into over and over again.

Because if we don't process and integrate this, it seems like we would still then keep that compartment closed off and disconnected and we haven't actually fully resolved and opened that place up for there to be the regulation and the flow flow.

Yeah, exactly. And if I use myself as an example, I will bet again that if I hadn't gotten into the somatic experiencing work when I did, then if I had just stayed in Feldenkrais and at that time I was in fitness and nutrition, I might be living with fibromyalgia right now.

Probably would be because if I think about the kind of pain that I've experienced the last five years where it is fully spinel, fully facial, I can barely move in the morning, tender sore points, just all these things.

That's exactly that's chronic pain. So I know I know darn well that I would be diagnosed with that. And so when I think about, say, five or myalgia, we use that as an example, which is so high right now in Western worlds.

If I think about Robert Scare, the late Robert Scare, who wrote in his book Trauma Spectrum, there's a whole section on fibromyalgia, and he is convinced he was convinced that that is a result of cycling between autonomic, sympathetic and shut down at the pre-verbal level, level where that infant is not being met and it doesn't know what's going on.

And so it's spiking. And so it sets the tone, not just in the nervous system, but in the skeleton and the fascia, in the movement patterns and the entire and the entire system.

And then, of course, that person grows up and and and then a big occurs and then they get all of this chronic pain. So it is an interesting one because someone might say, well, this doesn't make sense.

I haven't had the sort of accidents that Irene had. I haven't it's like you don't have to have done sport. It can also be intense survival stress from infancy in childhood that is is trapped and that functional frees to go back to that has kept you going and has kept you safe.

And then what often occurs Aimie, and then be interesting to see if this what you've seen in your clients and students is the symptoms come out when life gets better, when there's more safety, when there's more money in the bank, when there is a good relationship.

Because again, like I said, the system goes, we can down now we can process. It wasn't safe to process this stuff when I was working five jobs, going to school and trying to raise my kids.

And then that's where people think they're going backwards. Exactly right. I see that a lot with the fatigue so people come in and they have pushed themselves.

So hard for so. Long that their body literally is living on fumes at this point. Off of deprivation, living off of negligence. And so they can't keep this up anymore.

And yet then when they start this work and we start to open things up, the the fatigue doesn't go away immediately. It can get worse. It can get worse. Yeah.

And so knowing the again the knowledge coming back to how much you're stressing the importance of knowing that this is how the body processes stuff, that this is not a setback, that in fact when you start to feel those tingles, your legs feel like water is running down your legs like this is a good.

Thing. In your legs. And I have I've seen that I have to shift that framework for people so that as they experience these things that they would normally consider a setback, we start celebrating because, look, your body is waking up.

You are feeling thing. The same thing that I tell them. That will happen with a diabetic who has lost the feeling in their toes because their nerves have started to deteriorate.

Yeah. When we get them on the right medications and their blood sugar starts coming down, then the body can start heal itself. And guess what they feel?

First they feel pain now, but they feel pain in an area where they haven't felt anything yet. So this is actually something to celebrate. Yeah, it's. And it's hard to celebrate something that feels so crappy, but it's true.

Or, you know, if celebration is too much for someone, know that you're on the right path to healing. Exactly. It. Because I trust me, it is really tough when you're feeling like this and you just want it to go away, right?

You want it to go away and you have to give yourself some grace. And that's where I said sometimes it does help to have something resource wise that maybe cuts the pain a little bit, that, you know, offer yourself something that will give you a little bit of resource that's extra as opposed to, you know, white knuckling it.

And just because the thing is, we also have to give the system rest when it's healing. We can't just keep going and going. There needs to be moments where the system I mean, it's, you know, the lingo, the energy wells and somatic experiencing lingo.

The moment you have a new well where there's a bit more capacity, you need to stay in that well long enough for it to really be solid before you push yourself to another level of capacity.

And that, I think doesn't get taught enough in mainstream and this is why we're seeing a lot of disasters with people going to certain retreats and why people are getting blown up with plant medicine and breathwork and all these things.

## Creating Space for Regulation and Recovery

There hasn't been enough foundation and the well is just being blown apart and the pieces are like all those pieces that we talked about at the top of our talk that have been hidden inside have just been catapulted either into that person's psyche or into their body or a bit of both.

And that's why we will see psychosis sometimes after some of these things where a person cannot contain because everything has just been blown out of the water.

So to finish that thought, because that's a little bit of a tangent, this is why it is so important for people to understand what could be could potentially be lurking.

And this is why we see these disasters in some of these situations where too much is being done too soon. We just don't know what the system is storing.

And some people might have success with that stuff, some people might not. And that's where I think safety and ethics is. That's a whole other story. But it's very important to take these things slow.

So what I hear you saying is that when we bring in space, when we create space in our life, that's when the body has more space. To create. Things up that need healing, that have been waiting for that space.

It's helpful to have time. So time and space will allow us to invite more of that healing work to happen. And then knowledge piece is. So important, all important.

As things come up. We, we at least have a framework to understand it. And we don't have that impulse to just focus on the symptoms and go to the doctor and take a medicine and go down that route only we'll be able to have a framework of understanding.

Like my system as a whole is, is shifting, something is happening and it's it's how can I support all of it in this healing process and being able to see, as we were talking about earlier, being able to see the progress as things surface, this feels different.

This doesn't feel the exact same thing as last time that something surface like I am seeing progress as my body has gone through these cycles of discovering the next layer and then settling and then discovering the next layer and settling that there's progress even with all of the layers that we have yet to uncover.

Yes. And what you said just there, progress is an important word because you do need to monitor all of your systems. So when you start, say, healing, working with the nervous system, working with this functional phrase and whatever way you might work with it, you want to kind of have a tab on all the physiological center systems.

This is, again, we're learning about your body even at the base level is important. How is your urination? How are your bowel movements? How is your immune system?

How is your sleep? How is your clarity of thinking? Are you going outside? How is your energy name all the systems in the body? There's so many of them because we don't want the system.

So if you think of all those systems, there's dozens. We want to ensure that all of those systems are integrating with that shift. I'm using my hands here so that another shift doesn't occur too soon, because if it doesn't, those systems aren't going to know what happens.

And then maybe all of them bounce back or some of them bounce back and it's not perfect, right? It's not going to be perfect. So, yes, when I mentioned how I had that acid reflux, I'm going to bet if I could go back in time.

I was dealing with a layer and I probably still didn't have enough space and time to just because I'm busy, I'm doing things. And if I had just rested for five days, that may not have happened.

But was that possible? Probably not. Who knows? So again, if you find that, you know, more than 50% of your symptoms, systems, physiological systems, this is not a science.

I'm just making this up right now. But let's just say 50% of them are continuing to be sluggish and get on well, that's not that's a side too much is happening too fast.

But if all all of them are going forward but there's a little weirdness in your sleep, which is actually a very common thing. Your sleep will get disturbed when you come out of functional freeze guaranteed.

But everything else is moving forward. I think that's good. Right. So that's another thing is to understand like do not ignore the fact that that your bladder feels a little more pressure possible, that it's just freaking out a little bit because you're not in deep dorsal shutdown anymore.

Right. But again, you got to listen to that. That makes sense. Makes so much sense. And as we wrap up, what would be your your final words of encouragement for someone. Who.

Maybe like us, is a professional? Because I have many, many of those professionals who are in my biology of trauma training now and this is them, right?

They are still having layers and still recognizing that, oh, I have a larger degree of functional frees than what I want to have in my life. I want to be even more present for myself, for the work that I do, the people that I work with.

But I'm still feeling like there's there's a lot more to do. And what would be your words of encouragement for them on their healing journey? Knowing knowing all of this that you've had in your experience with your own?

Well, for those who are working with other people, as you all just speak to that population, that cohort in order to continue to do the work for others, you're going to have to take the long road to becoming the Jedi.

Luke from Star Wars didn't figure it out in the first movie. It took him many movies, many years to master his force. The force. We use that analogy. So if anything, notice the energetic notice this your psyche, notice your survival physiology that might be going into more survival physiology, worrying about the fact that you're still dealing with all these things because and this is where mindset is a little important as you have to catch yourself in these loops and be able to at yourself provide space and go, I'm putting myself into this boat of feeling doom and this is never going to get any better.

And why? Why me? You know, I've dealt with this too, so I get it. And that's where you have to really real in those thoughts because they will impact the body and just know that this is another this is just another layer and this is part of it.

And then the final thing I'll say, which we talked about before we press record, which I think is important, is we have to understand that this level of functional phrase that many of us are working with has never been worked on before in the history of humanity.

That's a really important thing to understand. And so we don't have a map for this at all, and we're creating that map right now. So the more all of us who are in this work can really be patient and intelligent and see this as this new art form that we're working with, this new healing form.

I just I do think that things will actually get easier, but we have to treat it like it's this precious new thing that we've all discovered and just be patient with ourselves.

It's like we're on the cutting edge of what it means to live fully alive. 100% exciting. Yes, I think so. What a powerful interview. You can see why I love Irene and for us to be able to share with you real life experiences from our own experience of working with our own nervous system.

Hopefully this will give you both hope and some guidance and some understanding for understanding your own nervous system as you are on your own healing journey.

Because we are each on our own healing journey. Everyone has work to do to improve their health, the flexibility and the aliveness of your nervous system.

And with that, this concludes this interview. Thank you for joining me. I will say. That I do know that this is a lot of information and you know that this was an advanced conversation.

This is not an entry level conversation and advanced level conversation. So if this is over your head, don't worry.

This is when I would recommend that you purchase the recording so that when you are further down the road and this would be a conversation and discussion that would really land for you at that time because you've done more work, just purchase the recordings and then you can have that peace of mind that you have everything that you need for your healing journey.

You can come back to it whenever you are ready and it will make more sense. Or like we talked about in this interview, you will have more time and space.

With that, I'm your host, Dr. Aimie, for this summit. And I will see you on the next interview.