

Trauma & How to Restore Goodness

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You will learn:

- How trauma affects the Nervous System

- How unresolved developmental trauma can lead to issues such as anxiety and depression
- The relationship between attachment and trauma
- How trauma can be resolved using a somatic, or body-centered approach
- 3 highly effective tools to calm the nervous system

Trauma is:

- A highly energized state
- The result of undischarged energy
- When threatened 'a wild amount of energy is mobilized' and 'locked down when frightened'
- The "lock down" IS the problem IN the nervous system

Trauma also occurs because we are:

- Often alone or unsupported at time of event
- Have lost **connection to others** and to **ourselves**
- Unable to access **comfort** and co-regulate in the time of need

Somatic Experiencing

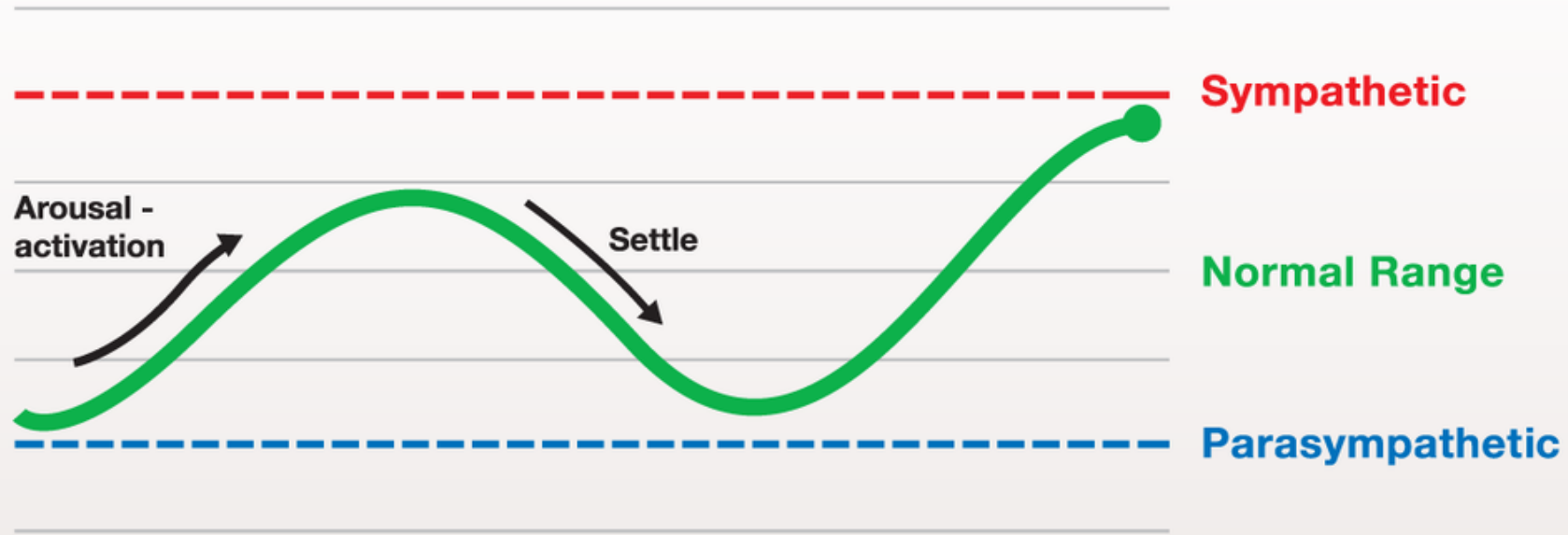
Somatic Experiencing® (SE) is a potent psychobiological method for resolving trauma symptoms and relieving chronic stress. SE is designed to resolve traumatic stress and increase the capacity to negotiate stress and trauma.

Connection:

We are hard-wired for it!

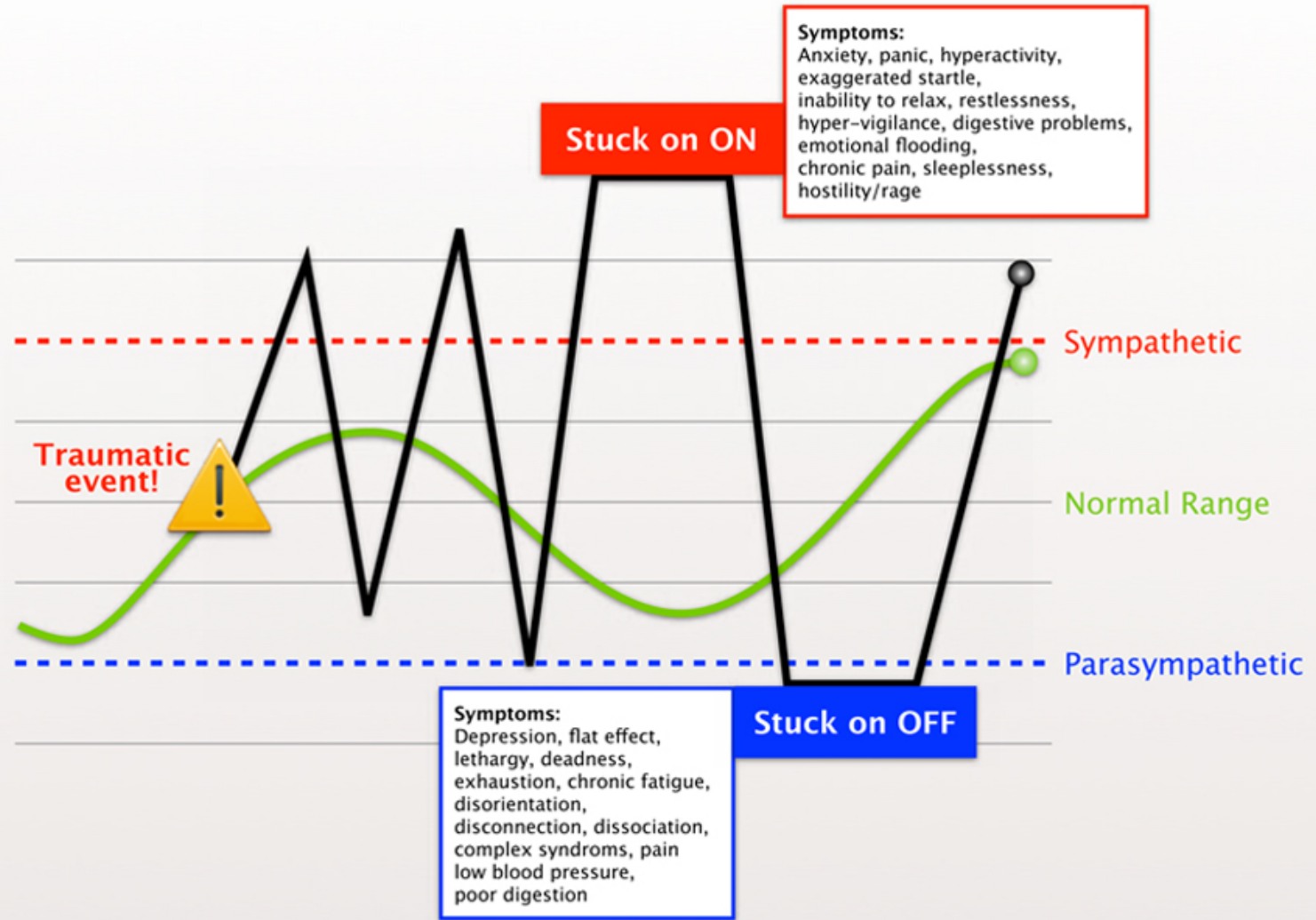


A Healthy Nervous System



Source: Foundation for Human Enrichment

Symptoms of Un-Discharged Traumatic Stress



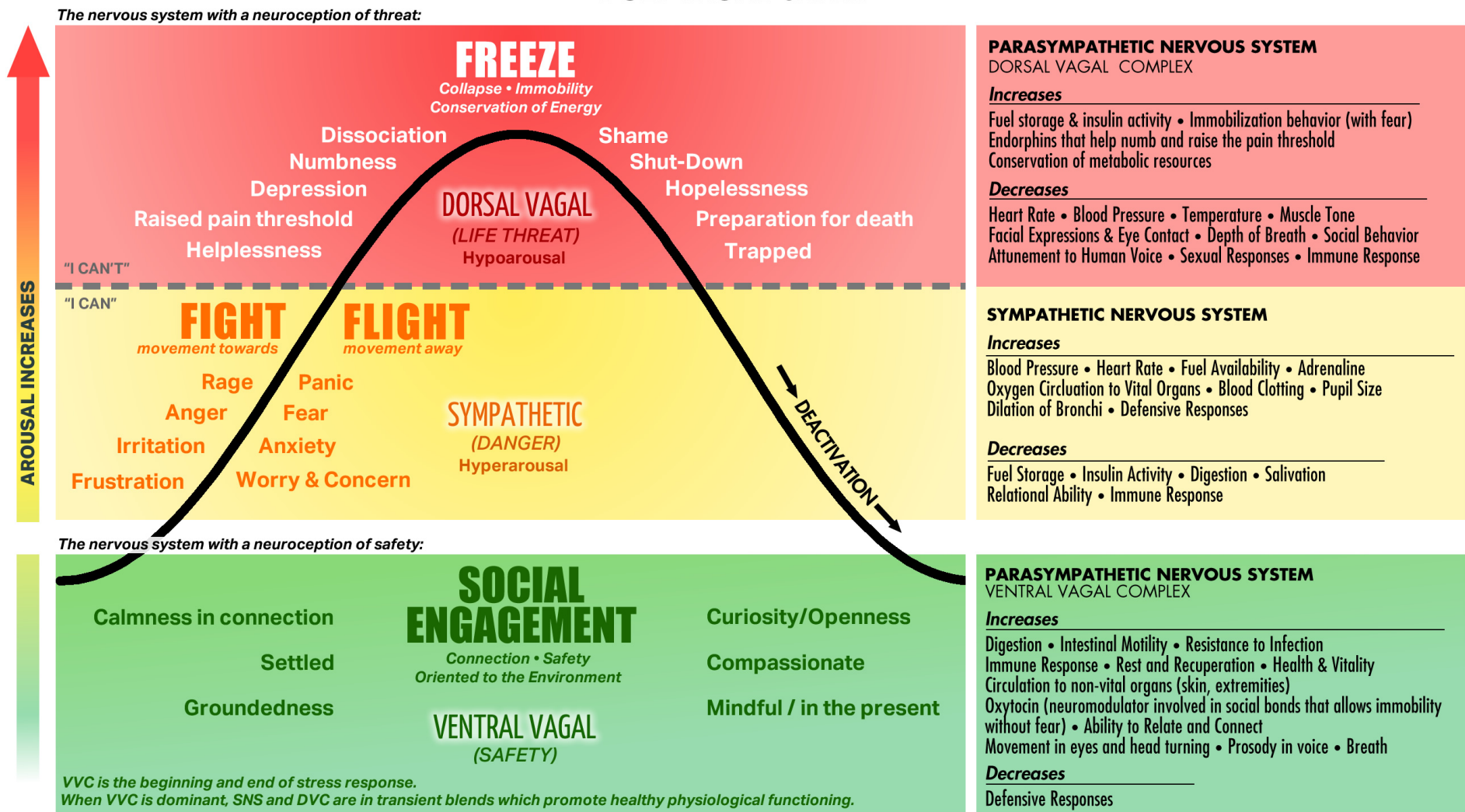
#1. Tool: Orienting to Wellness

- An invitation to:
 - Slowly, notice ... your...feet
 - Slowly, notice ...
“Something you are attracted to”
- Sensations

Hand Model of the Brain



POLYVAGAL CHART



Let's take a
break . . .

Notice ...

. . . what you are
attracted to in this
picture.



Types of Trauma:

OBVIOUS:	NON-OBVIOUS: (that body subconsciously perceives as threatening)
MVA & High Impact	Surgeries
Physical Injuries	Falls
Death	Betrayal/Infidelity
Sexual Abuse	Emotional Neglect
Physical Abuse	Pre and Peri Natal
Inescapable Attack (animal/escape inhibited)	Anesthesia
Shootings	High Fevers
Natural disasters	ACOA – “walking on eggshells”
	Depressed caregiver/not “present” emotionally
	Illnesses

Symptoms of Trauma

Core of the traumatic reaction:	Early symptoms – same time or shortly after can be:
❖ Hyperarousal	❖ Hypervigilance (“on guard at all times)
❖ Constriction (energy/body)	❖ Intrusive imagery or flashbacks
❖ Dissociation (including denial)	❖ Extreme sensitivity to light and sound
❖ Feelings of helplessness	❖ Exaggerated emotional and startle responses
	❖ Nightmares
	❖ Abrupt mood swings e.g. rage reactions or temper tantrums
	❖ Reduced ability to deal with stress (easily and frequently stressed out)
	❖ Difficulty sleeping

Other symptoms that can show up:

Next phase of Development:	Final group of Symptoms:
Panic attacks, anxiety and phobias	Muted or diminished emotional response
Mental "blankness" or "spaciness"	Inability to make commitments
Frequent crying	Immune system problems
Hyperactivity	Psychosomatic illnesses, particularly headaches, neck and back problems, severe PMS
Abrupt mood swings	Diminished interest in life
Fear of dying, having a shortened life, going crazy	Amnesia and forgetfulness
Difficulty with sleep	Inability to love, nurture or bond with other people
	Reduced ability to deal with stress and to formulate plans

Non-Obvious Developmental Injuries

- Babies cannot regulate themselves
- Needs regulated, calm, present caregiver to “plug-in” to
- Social and Environmental Factors:
- Babies have 2 options

Unresolved
trauma creates
dysregulation
within the
nervous system:

- The charge of energy gets 'stuck' in our bodies.
- Have effects that people often do not realize are connected to their past traumatic experiences
- Bessel Van Der Kolk says "*With trauma time stands still*" in the body....in our bodies it feel like we are still in the time of the event.

#2. Tool: Self-Hug

- Feet on floor
- Right hand to side where your heart is
- Left hand across
- Notice “shift”



Why is it that animals in the wild, who are repeatedly exposed to life-threatening events, don't develop the symptoms of PTSD like humans?

- Animals complete *full sequence of a response to danger by noticing, reacting (FFF), and ... recovering* from the threat.
- When in jeopardy or threat, animals will access and expend **ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF ENERGY** providing the "fuel" to escape the danger.
- We are also mammals

Peter Levine
discovered:

- All animals (including humans) have a natural “immunity” to the long-term, debilitating effects of trauma.

SE Informed by Animals In The Wild

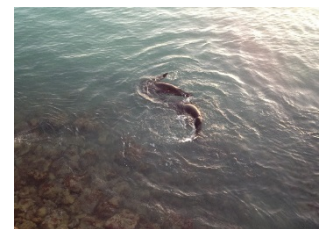
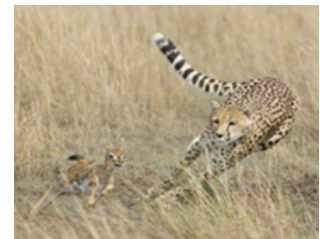
Overwhelmed or threatened, animals go through predictable stages of responding to danger via fight, flight & freeze

In order to optimize chances for survival, the body:

- **Activates** implicit, hardwired survival sequences
- **Mobilizes** high levels of energy to defend itself
- **Shuts-down** unnecessary bodily functions

After threat has passed, animals return to normal functioning by:

- **Discharging** survival energy
- **Integrating** excess activated energy



Completion of a Survival Response:

- A short video of a polar bear demonstrating active completion of survival (fight/flight/freeze) responses.
 - [Fight/Flight Polar Bear](#)

Why animals in the wild are not traumatized:

- There is a **discharge of excess energy *through the body***
- ***Completion of Self-Protective Responses*** : FIGHT (biting), FLIGHT (running)
- The body returns to baseline: through trembling, shaking, bucking, jumping, kicking, running further than necessary to simply escape the predator

A short look at Peter's work:

- [How Trauma Gets Stuck in the Body \(and How to Work with It\)](#)

Physiological
responses are
key:

- Somatic Experiencing® focuses on the **physiological responses** (sensations and movements) that occur when someone experiences, or, remembers an overwhelming or traumatic event, in his or her body, rather than only through the thoughts or emotions connected to it.

Felt Sense: The Language of Sensation

Intensity of Sensations

Sharp Dull
Intense Weak
Hard Soft
Pressure Solid

Muscle Sensations

Trembling Achy
Shuddering Crampy
Shivery Twitching
Pulsing Fluttery
Shaky Shuddering
Throbbing Tense
Spasming

Skin Sensations

Itchy Prickly
Tingly Sweaty
Moist Clammy
Dry Flushed
Goosebumps

Temperature

Frozen Icy
Cold Cool
Numb Warm
Hot Boiling
Steaming

Constriction Sensations

Stuck Contracted
Knotted Tight
Blocked Congested
Tense Constricted
Breathless
Compressed
Suffocating

Whole Body Sensations

Trembling Heavy Thick
Vibrating Flaccid Full Puffy
Jittery Gurgling Energized
Light Calm Fidgety Jumpy
Tingling Faint Fuzzy Wobbly
Spinning Buzzing

Expansion Sensations

Expansive Moving
Floating Flowing
Fluid Relaxed
Radiating Glowing
Waves Streaming

Felt Sense Exercise

- Think of an experience or person that makes you happy, brings a smile to your face
- Identify 1 sensation as you bring this resource to mind
- What is the size, shape, texture, movements, or even color associated with this sensation?
- As you become aware of these qualities inside, notice what's happening now: *How do you feel overall?*

Resources

Anchors that help stabilize folks

- **EXTERNAL**

- People, places or activities (in reality or in imagination) that are comforting, calming, settling
 - *Safe people, pets, places in nature, home, special rooms, music, exercise, travel, vacation, spiritual community*
- The therapist's engagement: capacity to track well, to be in resonance/attunement, to create a safe space in the office

- **INTERNAL**

- When client experiences settling, less constriction, more breath, more presence, pleasure
- Positive sensations in the body:
 - *relaxed, more spacious, less tense, grounded, stable, connected, have a freer range of movement, tingling, more alive*

#3. Tool Self-Holding Techniques

- Head
(Forehead/Back of head OR sides of head)
- Forehead and Heart
- Heart and Tummy
- Adrenals
- *.....until you "Notice a shift"*

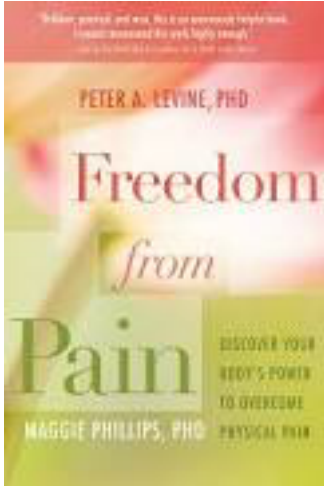
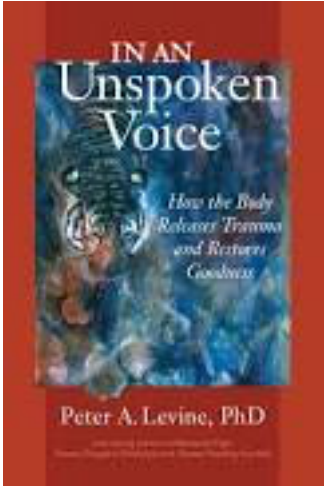
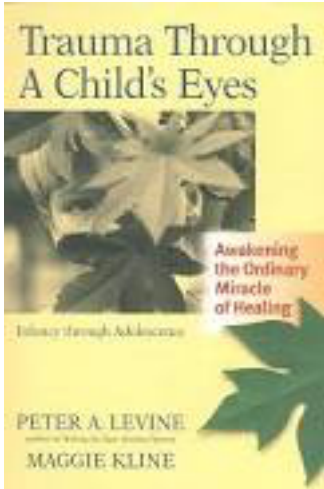
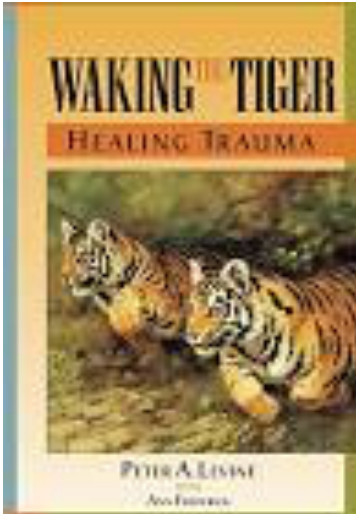
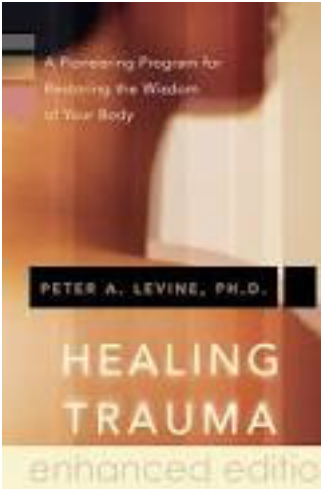
Ways to Discharge the energy of Fight, Flight, Freeze and to HEAL...

- Essentially, we need to help
 - feel and allow the Fight,
 - feel and allow the Flight and/or
 - and help the nervous system to move out of Freeze with movement..
- Many tools are used including:
 - Grounding
 - Felt sense
 - Orienting to Wellness
 - Titration
 - Pendulation
 - Restoring orienting responses, self protective responses, defensive orienting responses and many, many more techniques
- Creating Corrective Experiences
 - depending on what was thwarted...remember the body knows and our impulses are there and ready to go

When our nervous system is balanced, and our activation is low, we feel:

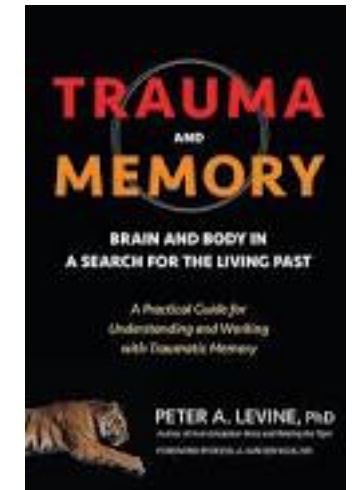
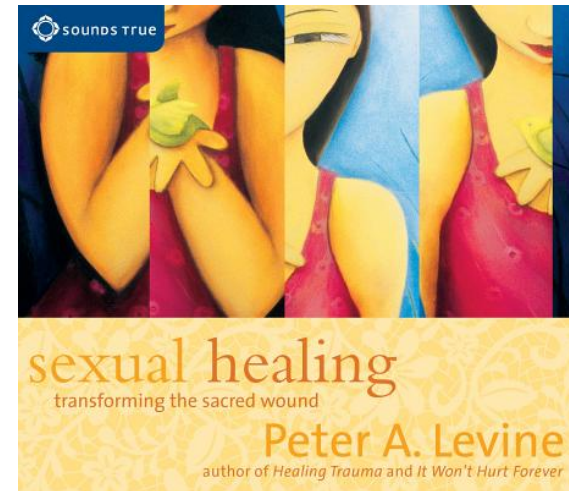
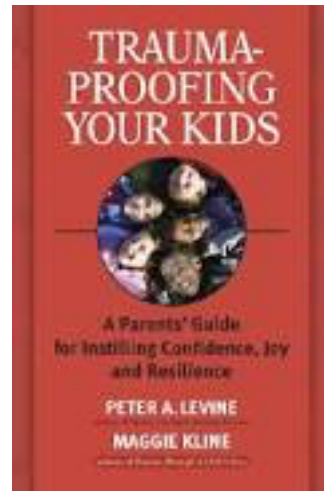
Open, curious	Relaxed, yet alert
Embodied	Appropriately reactive
Available for Connection	Able to be present
Fluid, resilient Competent	Emotionally stable
Competent	Healthy
We have choices and options. We can reach out for support when we can't do it on our own.	

Books by Dr. Peter A. Levine



More books,
audio &
websites

- Sexual Healing: Transforming the Sacred Wound



www.traumahealing.org

-YouTube videos

Calm, Curious
and
Embodied

