



POLYVAGAL THEORY 101: BEFRIENDING YOUR *NERVOUS SYSTEM*

TO RECEIVE EROS + EXPAND YOUR CREATIVE PLEASURE AND POTENTIAL



CREATIVE EXPANSION CHALLENGE

***WHY NERVOUS SYSTEM
MASTERY IS THE KEY TO
CREATIVE EXPANSION +
MUSE ENERGY***

✦ Nervous system mastery is the ability to sense, connect with, use, and direct eros/life force/creative energy

✦ The Muse is a channel of pure eros/creative energy/sensation

✦ The Muse is able to remain OPEN and RECEPTIVE to eros' divine inspiration because she has mastered the nervous system

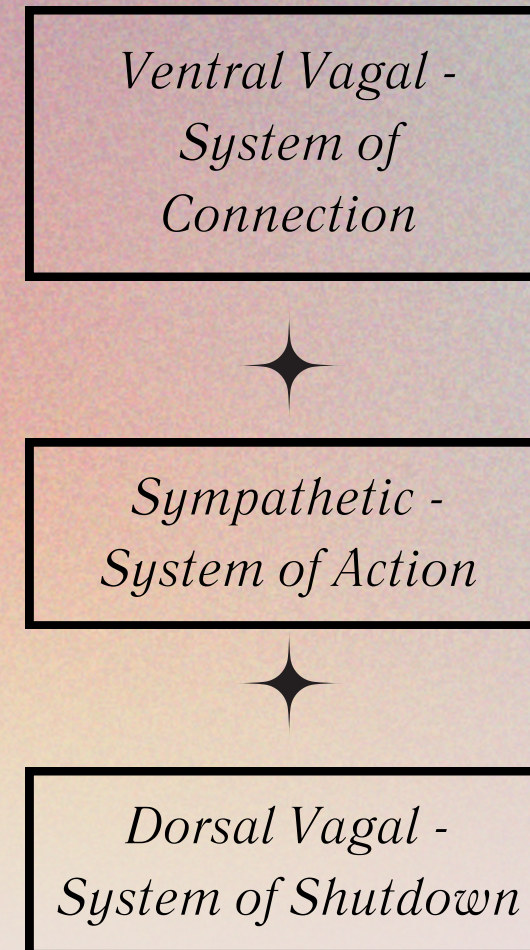


3 PRINCIPLES of POLYVAGAL THEORY

- ✦ Autonomic Hierarchy
- ✦ Neuroception
- ✦ Co-regulation

AUTONOMIC HIERARCHY

The nervous system is organized around three building blocks that work in a certain order and come with preset pathways



each of these building blocks works in a specific way and affects our biology thru connections inside the body & impacting how we see, sense, and engage with the world

✦ *AUTONOMIC HIERARCHY* ✦

Ventral Vagal - System of Connection

Developed ~ 200 million years ago

*Provides a pathway to health & well-being
where life feels manageable*

Qualities:

- meet the demands of the day
- connect and communicate
 - go with the flow
 - engage with life

✦ AUTONOMIC HIERARCHY ✦

Sympathetic - System of Action

Developed ~ 400 million years ago

*Activated when life feels overwhelming, when too many things are happening at once,
when it feels like we are faced with a never-ending series of challenges*

We lose our sense of safety in the present moment and ability to see the bigger picture

Qualities:

- filled with chaotic energy
 - mobilized to attack
 - driven to escape
 - anxious
 - angry

✦ *AUTONOMIC HIERARCHY* ✦

Dorsal Vagal - System of Shutdown

Developed ~ 500 million years ago

Activated when continue to feel trapped in a cycle of endless challenges with no way out and no way to manage

We begin to shut down and disconnect

Qualities:

- going through the motions
 - drained of energy
 - disconnection
 - loss of hope
 - giving up

***FINDING THE FLAVOR OF
THE BUILDING BLOCKS***

Dorsal Vagal - System of Shutdown

*Feel into the experience of disconnection, collapse,
and shutdown and fill in the two sentences:*

“The world is...”

“I am...”

The world may feel dark, empty, unwelcoming
You may feel lost, abandoned, untethered

***★ FINDING THE FLAVOR OF
THE BUILDING BLOCKS ★***

Sympathetic - System of Action

*Feel into the overwhelming sympathetic flood of
energy and fill in the two sentences:*

“The world is...”

“I am...”

**The world may feel chaotic, terrifying, unmanageable
You may feel dysregulated, in danger, out of control**

***FINDING THE FLAVOR OF
THE BUILDING BLOCKS***

Ventral Vagal - System of Connection

*Feel into the experience of safety and regulation and fill in
the two sentences:*

“The world is...”

“I am...”

The world may feel beautiful, welcoming, inviting of connection

You may feel alive, well, curious, filled with possibility

NEUROCEPTION:

✦ *Your Internal Surveillance System*

Your nervous system is aware of signs of safety and signals of danger

With a neuroception of:

- Safety - we move out into the world and into connection (ventral vagal)
 - Danger - we move into sympathetic fight or flight
- Life threat - we move into dorsal vagal collapse and shutdown

THREE STREAMS OF NEUROCEPTIVE AWARENESS

(EMBODIED LISTENING)

Inside Listening

- What's happening inside your body
- Heartbeat, breath, rhythms and muscle actions
- Inside your organs, especially those involved with digestion

Outside Listening

- Begins in your immediate environment
(where you are physically located)
- Expands into the larger world to include neighborhoods, nations, and the global community

Between Listening

The way your nervous system communicates with other nervous systems 1:1 or in groups

THREE STREAMS OF NEUROCEPTIVE AWARENESS (*EMBODIED LISTENING*)

These streams of awareness are always working, micro-moment to micro-moment, below our conscious awareness, bringing about the autonomic state changes that:

Invite us into connection

— or —

Move us away from connection & into fight, flight, or shutdown

THREE STREAMS OF NEUROCEPTIVE AWARENESS (*EMBODIED LISTENING*)

Our story, how we feel, act, and think, begins with neuroception

When we bring perception to neuroception,
we bring awareness to an otherwise nonconscious experience

When we explicitly and intentionally notice the state alive with us,
we can connect with feeling, beliefs, behaviors,
and the story we carry through our days

When we learn to attend to our inner state,
we can begin to shape our stories in new ways

CO-REGULATION

✦ *WE ARE WIRED FOR CONNECTION*

Finding safe connection with others is necessary for our survival

When we are born we are physically unable to regulate on our own and naturally turn towards others for our physical and emotional survival needs

As we grow, our experience of co-regulation offer a foundation to explore regulating on our own

Even as we learn to self regulate, the need and longing for connection and co-regulation continues

✦ ***WHY DOES THIS MATTER?*** ✦

Through our understanding of the autonomic hierarchy, neuroception, and co-regulation, we can learn to relate with ourselves, others, our emotions, our creativity and our experience of eros in ways that support well-being, joy, and pleasure

3 *ELEMENTS*
for WELL BEING

- ✦ Context
- ✦ Choice
- ✦ Connection

Context

from the Latin word contextere, meaning “to weave together”



involves gathering information about how, what, and why
to understand and respond to experience

Explicit communication cues safety in our nervous system

*Implicit communication more likely cues unsafety and protection patterns;
we often respond in the present moment based on past experience*

For example:

Sense the difference between when a friend cancels plans and gives you the reason (context),
versus cancels without reason

Choice



With choice, we can be still or move, connect or protect, approach or avoid

When choice is limited or taken away or we sense we are stuck without options,
we begin to look for ways out via survival response >>>

*This can trigger the energy of the sympathetic nervous system with anger or anxiety,
or we can feel our energy draining as we are pulled into dorsal vagal collapse*

**Even in simple day-to-day actions
we are more able to stay anchored in safety and regulation when there are options**

When there are unlimited options, we can feel overwhelmed, lost at sea, and unable to make a choice

We each have a sweet spot composed of flexible boundaries that creates a framework for our choices

Connection



Brings a sense of relationship

Encompasses four domains

Connection to self (safely embodied)

Connection to others (people & pets)

Connection to nature & the world around us

Connection to spirit

When there is a rupture in our sense of connection:

- our ability to stay in safety + regulation is challenged
- we turn to communication & social engagement to find our way back into connection

With an ongoing disruption we often reach out in desperation before retreating into despair

RECAP

The Muse is able to remain OPEN and RECEPTIVE to eros' divine inspiration because she has mastered her nervous system

Nervous system mastery looks like:

Understanding the autonomic hierarchy

Being attuned to the 3 streams of neuroceptive awareness (embodied listening)

Co-regulation

Context

Choice

Connection

The ability to state shift