

**(PolyVagal Theory in Practice)  
TIFI June 2, 2023  
Katarina Halm**

**Part of TIFI Focusing Highlight  
"Focusing Facilitators as the New  
Educators and Leaders" with  
Lawrence Berger, Katarina Halm,  
and Rosa Zubizarreta. June 2, 2023**



**“Politics in Relation to Psychological and Spiritual Awareness”, Gendlin 1978, p. 1**

**“The realms of politics, personal growth/Focusing and spiritual awareness are usually thought about separately, as three different realms.**



**But they must come together. Nor can any of them be reduced to the other two, however overarching each may be. Although different, [they are] in need of each other.”**

CREDITS for the previous slide:

**“Politics in Relation to Psychological and Spiritual Awareness”, Gendlin 1978, p. 1.**

From Dave Young & Gisela Uhl Focusing Roundtable

- Focusing On Politics: “Focusing Needs A Structural Political Consciousness” ~ Gene Gendlin

<https://focusing.org/event/focusing-roundtable-focusing-politics-focusing-needs-structural-political-consciousness-gene>

Within the compilation ” Gene Quotes For Politically Responsible Focusing Assembled by Dave Young & Gisela Uhl

[https://focusing.org/sites/default/files/upload/2020-07/Gendlin-Quotes-on-Focusing-and-Political-Consciousness\\_0.pdf](https://focusing.org/sites/default/files/upload/2020-07/Gendlin-Quotes-on-Focusing-and-Political-Consciousness_0.pdf)

Noting also: [Gisela Uhl: “The concept of Life ”](#)

# Scholarly Quotes

*The next 3 slides:*

~ Eugene Gendlin

~ Jan Winhall

# On Turning Competition into Co-regulation – Jan Winhall

“We live in a culture grounded in COMPETITION, EVALUATION and a RELENTLESS PURSUIT of grabbing more resources – money, power, status and stuff! Our bodies aren’t naturally equipped to thrive in this KIND of CLIMATE, and we often struggle with feeling truly safe and resourced enough; connected to ourselves and with each other; or we lack an authentic sense of really belonging here...

When we strip away most of what we see playing out within and around us, underneath it all, we all want and need the same thing – to feel “good enough” to be seen, included, valued, liked and even loved. In our lifelong quest to find this, we often get hurt, punished, told to be different, or act a certain, more “acceptable” way. .... *continued* ...

# On Turning Competition into Co-regulation - continued

We learn to blend in, cover up our authentic selves, detach from our feelings, or seek unhealthy solutions in an attempt to calm and soothe our unsettled, disconnected and overwhelmed bodies.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Let's come together, MEET our BODIES WHERE THEY ARE, and explore how we can EFFECTIVELY NAVIGATE the CHALLENGES of this competitive, evaluative and unpredictably changing culture while nurturing our bodies with what we truly need to thrive – each other.... Let's go!" –  
— Jan Winhall, MSW, RSW, FOT (emphasis added KH)

“One cannot solve a problem any old way. There cannot be a feedback object, a carrying forward of a complexity any old way.

The CHANGE in the FORMATION is not the same as the change inherent in feeling the direct referent once it is there. The formation is murky—then suddenly the FURTHER formation is what the direct referent FALLS OUT FROM as a stable object or datum. For some seconds or minutes sometimes months, the falling out does not occur. It is nothing like turning and reflecting on what is there waiting. It is a very special formation. When it falls out, every bit of that sequence is exactly what the previous bit required, and the object made by that sequence is a PERFECT FEEDBACK OBJECT.” (emphasis added KH)

– Eugene Gendlin, A Process Model (1997 d)  
Relevance and Perfect Feedback Object

# Diagrams & Charts

*The next 4 slides:*

- ~ 5 Lesson of Polyvagal Theory
- ~ Intervening Variable
- ~ Felt Sense Polyvagal Model (FSPM)
- ~ The Experiencing Scale (EXP Scale)



# 5 LESSONS OF POLYVAGAL THEORY

1. SAFETY FIRST – SAFETY IS THE BEDROCK

2. INTEROCEPTION- HONOUR YOUR  
MIND-BODY CONNECTION

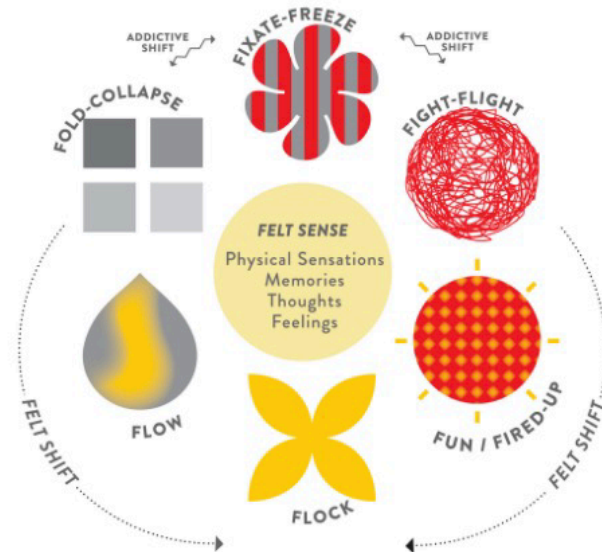
3. NEUROCEPTION- OUR BODY'S  
WISDOM IS DESIGNED TO SEEK SAFETY

4. THE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM- WE  
NEED EACH OTHER TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE

5. CO-REGULATION- BODY/ENVIRONMENTS  
ARE ALIVE AND CO-REGULATE

STIMULUS

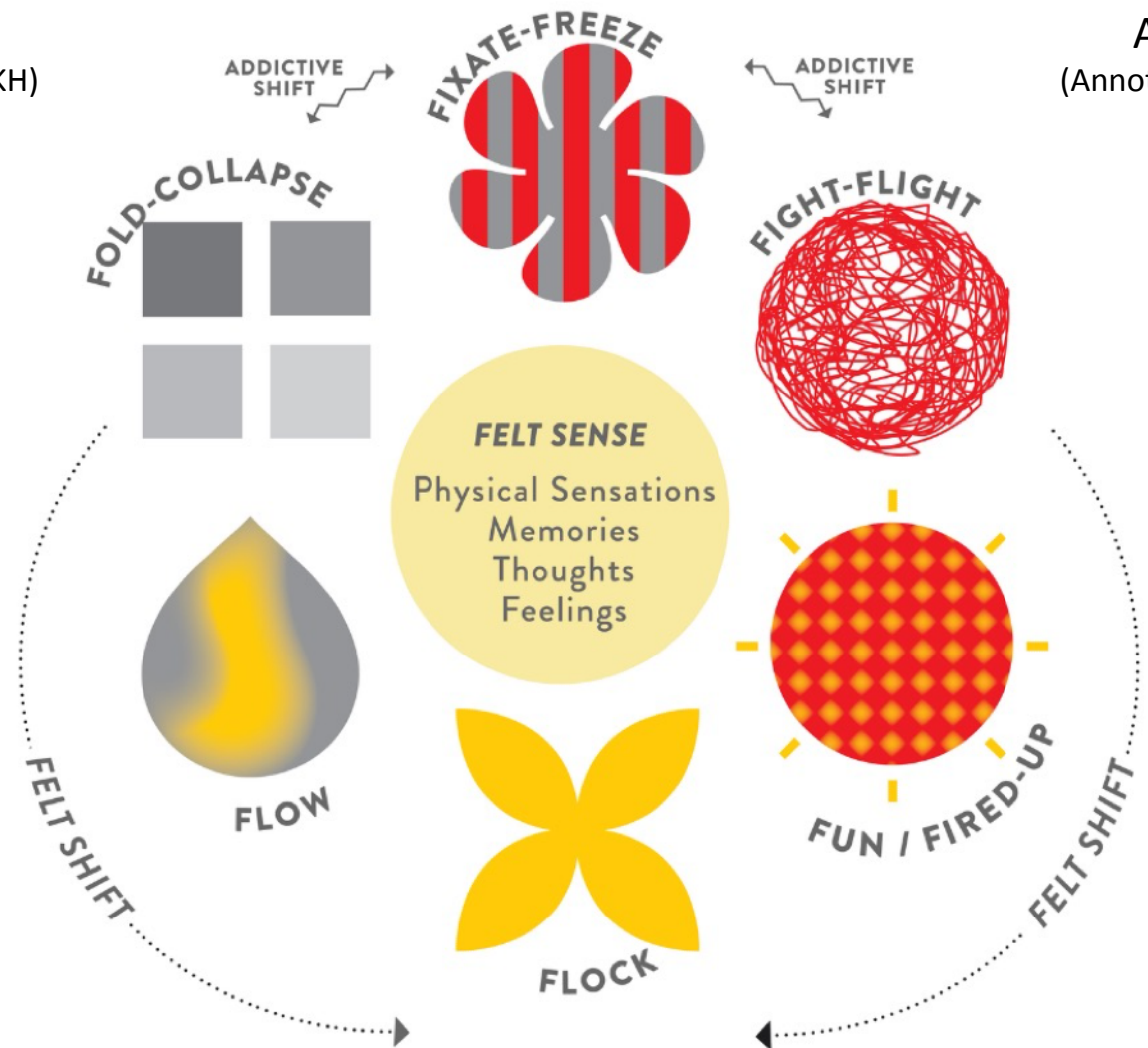
INTERVENING  
VARIABLE



RESPONSE

Parasympathetic  
ANS  
(Annotation KH)

Sympathetic  
ANS  
(Annotation KH)



The client simply talks about events, ideas or others

1

Refers to self but without expressing emotions

2

Expresses emotions but only as they relate to external circumstances

3

The client focuses directly on emotions and thoughts about self

4

Engages in an exploration of their inner experience (felt sense)

5

Gains awareness of previously implicit feelings and meanings (felt shift)

6

On-going process of in-depth self-understanding, which provides new perspectives to solve significant problems

7

# THE EXP (EXPERIENCING) SCALE

## REFERENCE

Klein, M., Mathieu-Coghlan, P. L., Gendlin, E. T., & Keisler, D. (1970). The Experiencing Scale: A research and training manual (vol. 1). Psychiatric Institute.

# Scholarly Quotes

*The next 9 slides:*

~ Moshé Feldenkrais

~ Theodosius Dobzhansky

~ Jeff Haller

~ Stephen Porges

~ Maxine Sheets-Johnstone

"entirely CAPABLE of taking CARE of YOURSELF  
in a CHANGING HOSTILE WORLD"

Moshé Feldenkrais, Talk: Sense of Inferiority Amherst Training

Year 1 Week 9 August 4 AM1 (49) (DVD 23T3)

“In those moments when awareness succeeds in being at one with feeling, senses, movement, and thought, the carriage will speed along on the right road. Then man can make discoveries, invent, create, innovate, and know. He grasps that his small world and the great world around are but one and that in this unity he is no longer alone.”

— Moshé Feldenkrais , page 54 *Awareness through Movement*. 1972, 1977

**“We act in accordance with our self-image. This self-image—which, in turn, governs our every act—is conditioned in varying degree by three factors: heritage, education, and self-education.”**

— Moshé Feldenkrais, Preface to *Awareness through Movement*. 1972, 1977





# POLYVAGAL THEORY

'If we want individuals to feel safe, we don't accuse them of doing something wrong or bad. We explain to them how their body responded, how their responses are adaptive, how we need to appreciate this adaptive feature, and how the client needs to understand that this adaptive feature is flexible and can change in different contexts. Then we can use our wonderfully creative and integrative brain to develop a narrative that treats our atypical behaviors not as bad, but as understandable in terms of adaptive functions that may often be heroic.'

Porges pg. 122 Pocketbook, 2017.



“the fittest may also be the gentlest, because survival often requires mutual help and cooperation”

(Dobzhansky, 1962).

<https://thinkinginmovement.ca/porges-dobzhansky/>

— Noted by Stephen W. Porges, page 135 in Porges, S. W. (2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic is a paradoxical challenge to our nervous system, a Polyvagal Perspective. *Clinical Neuropsychiatry*, 17(2),135-138.

According to Dobzhansky, it is this capacity to cooperate that enabled the earliest mammalian species to survive in a hostile world dominated by physically larger and potentially aggressive reptiles. Although unaware of Dobzhansky's major contributions, the publication that introduced Polyvagal Theory was titled "ORIENTING in a DEFENSIVE WORLD: Mammalian modifications of our evolutionary heritage. A Polyvagal Theory" (**Porges, 1995**). In retrospect, the title was a tribute to Dobzhansky's insightful statement that "nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution" (**Dobzhansky, 1973**). (emphasis added KH)

— Stephen W. Porges, page 135 in Porges, S. W. (2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic is a paradoxical challenge to our nervous system, a Polyvagal Perspective. *Clinical Neuropsychiatry*, 17(2),135-138.

“I have little interest in getting the CART and the HORSE mixed up as to which is in front. I don't give a whit about how a lesson appears to me or where it comes from. The suspension of mental activity and the ENTRANCE into an IMPERTURBABLE LISTENING is what happens. Listening for it destroys it.” (emphasis added KH)

– Jeff Haller, November, 2013

“A KINETIC INTELLIGENCE is forging its way in the world, shaping and being shaped by the developing dynamic patterns in which it is living. Thus again we see that possibilities at any given moment do not stand out as so many recourses of action; possibilities are **ADUMBRATED** [overshadowed] **in the immediacy of the evolving situation itself**, a situation that **moment by moment opens up a certain world and certain kinetic ways of being in that world.**” (emphasis added KH)

– Maxine Sheets-Johnstone. 1999, p. 489; 2011, p. 424.

The Primacy of Movement

(1st edition 1999, expanded 2nd edition 2011)

“Calling attention to ourselves in movement in this way, we have the possibility of discovering what is INVARIANTLY THERE in ANY FELT EXPERIENCE of movement. This is because whatever the HABITUAL movement, it now feels strange, even uncomfortable. Just such oddness jars us into an awareness of what we qualitatively marginalize in our habitual ways of doing things. By making the familiar strange, we familiarize ourselves anew with the familiar.”  
(emphasis added KH)

– Maxine Sheets-Johnstone.  
1999, p.143. *The Primacy of Movement*  
(1st edition 1999, expanded 2nd edition 2011)

# Additional Diagrams & Charts

*The next 4 slides:*

- ~ Interoception & Neuroception
- ~ Review of Intervening Variable
- ~ Review of Felt Sense Polyvagal Model (FSPM)
  - ~ (FSPM Basic Version)
  - ~ (FSPM Intricate Version)

# FSPM: TWO BODY PROCESSES

**FELT SENSE**

## **INTEROCEPTION**

FOCUSING  
& MINDFULNESS  
MEDITATION

***FOCUSING OFTEN  
CREATES A FELT  
SHIFT IN  
NEUROCEPTION***

**POLYVAGAL**

## **NEUROCEPTION**

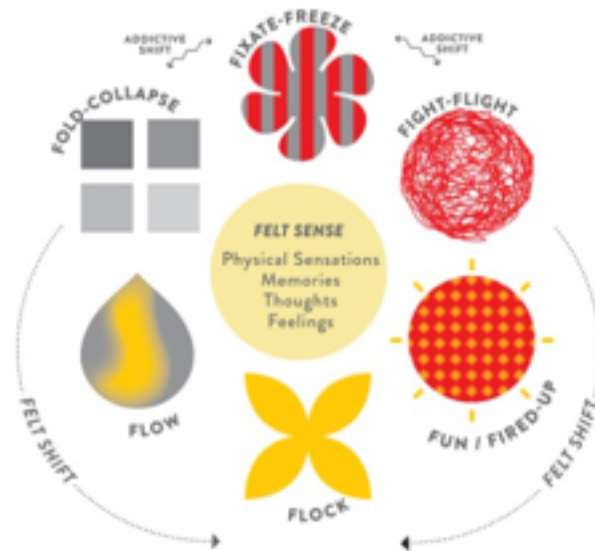
AUTONOMIC  
NERVOUS SYSTEM

THE  
SUBCONSCIOUS  
DETECTION OF  
SAFETY OR DANGER



STIMULUS

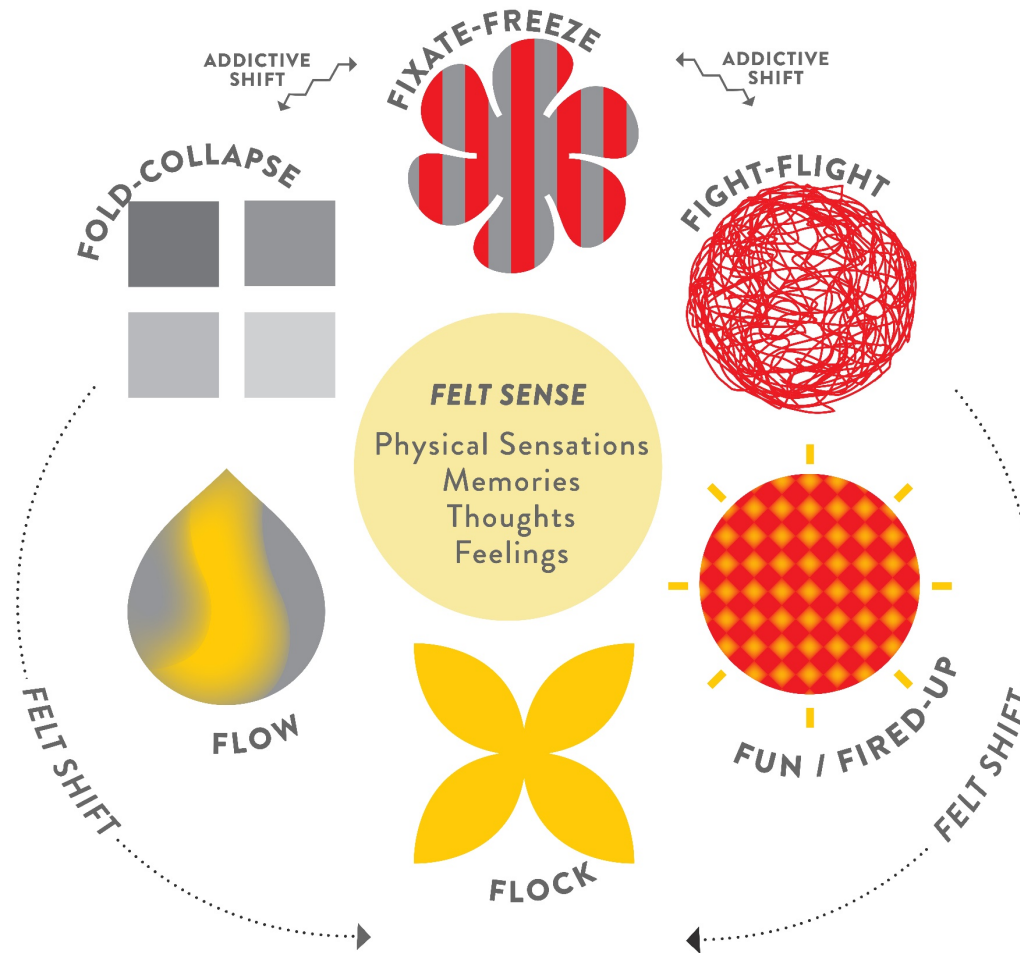
INTERVENING  
VARIABLE



RESPONSE

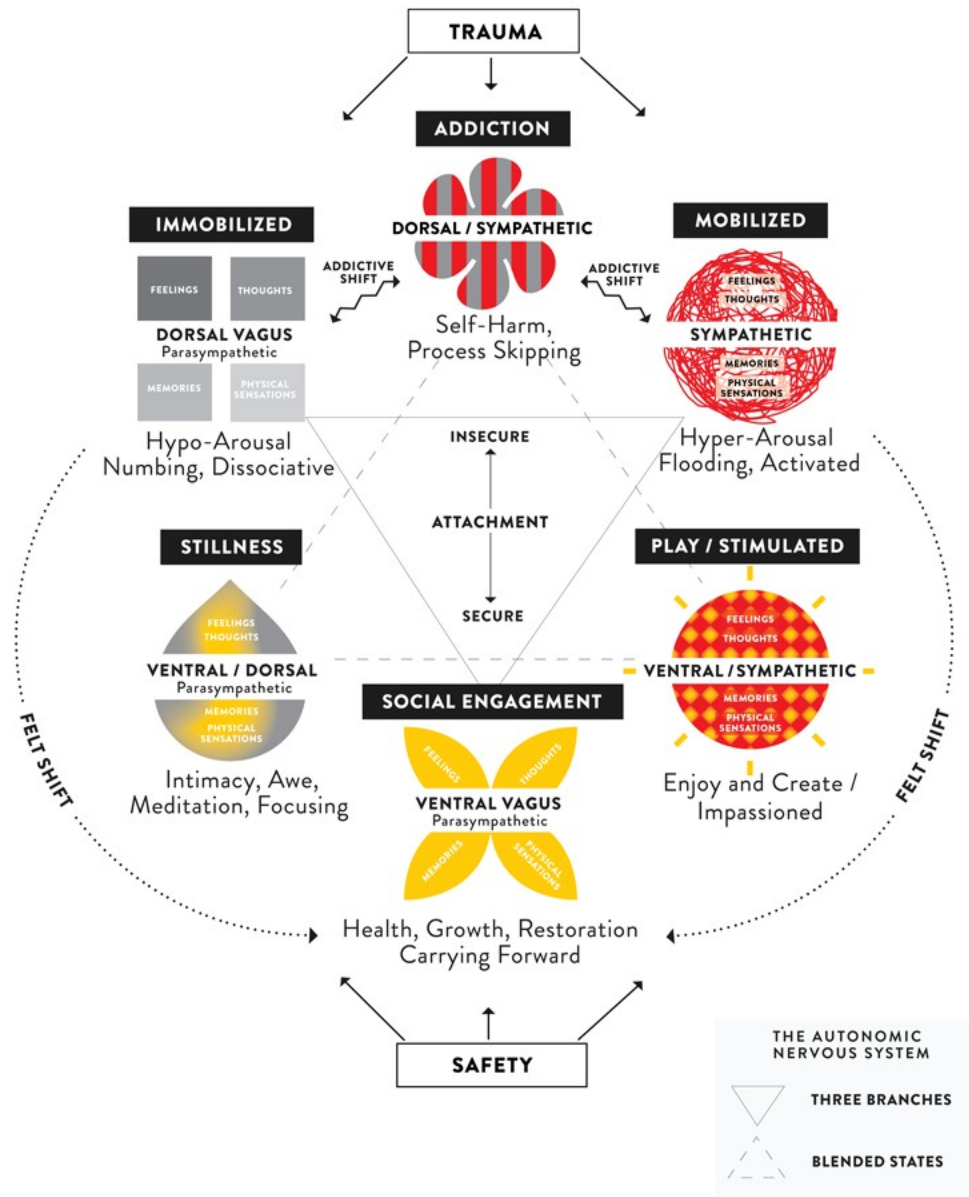
# THE FELT SENSE POLYVAGAL MODEL™ OF TRAUMA AND ADDICTION

CLIENT VERSION 6 F's (3/3)



# THE FELT SENSE / POLYVAGAL MODEL™ OF TRAUMA AND ADDICTION

CLINICIAN VERSION



# Anatomy for Polyvagal

*The next 5 slides:*

~ Polyvagal Woodcut Photolithograph  
(1940 after a Woodcut 1543)

~ Skeletal support for Polyvagal

[The seats of weight Mabel Todd](#)

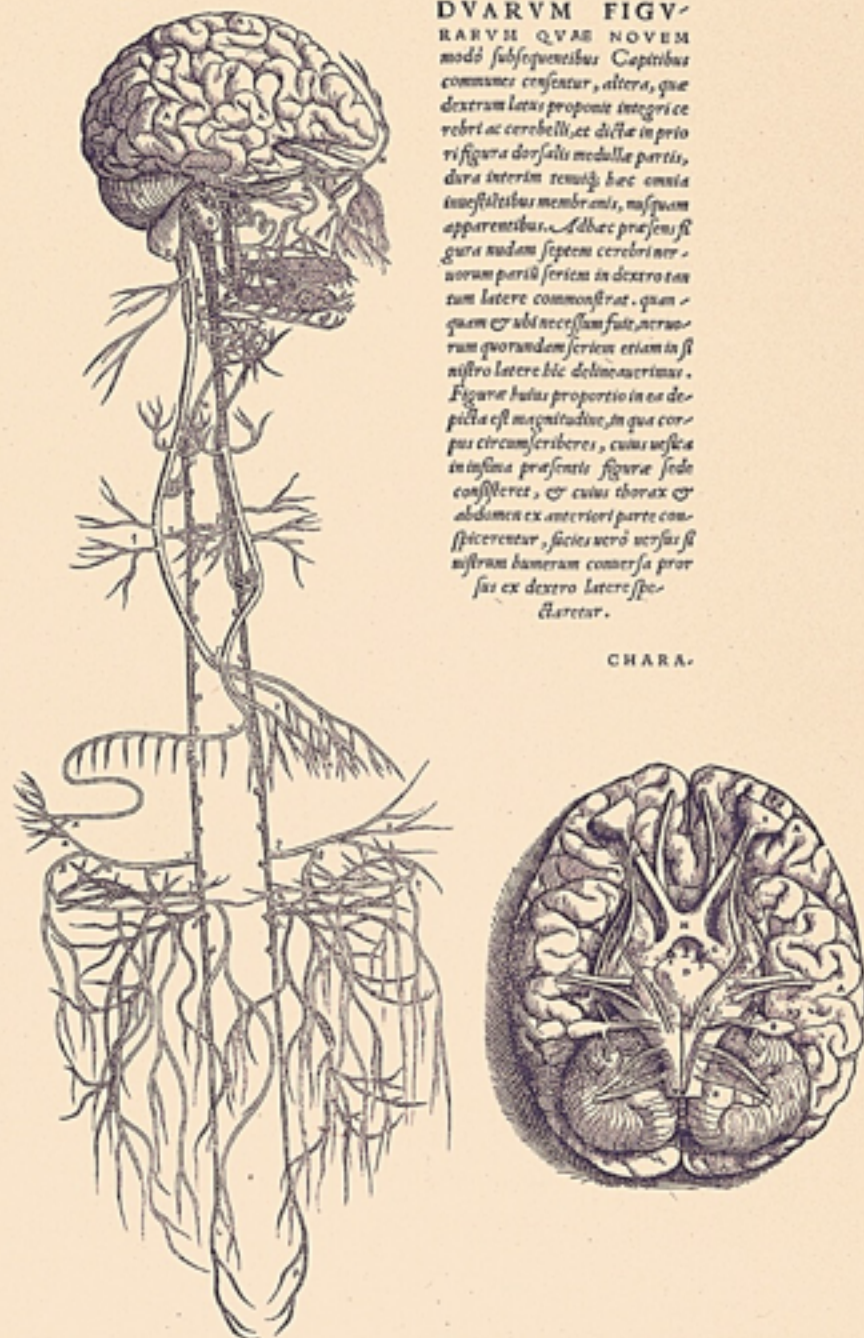
[The line of gravity Mabel Todd](#)

~ Branches of the Vagus Nerve and the organs it passes through (Wendi Rappazzo 2009)

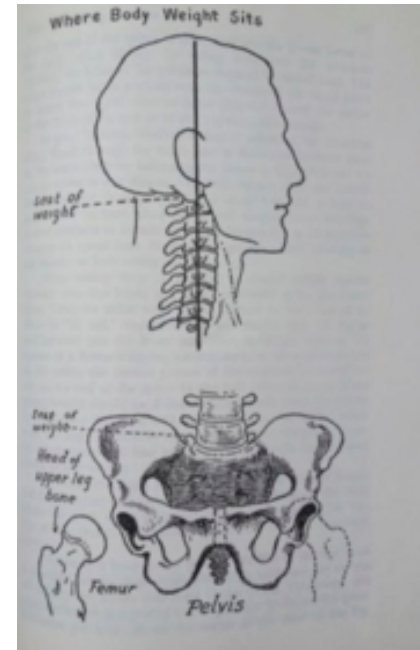
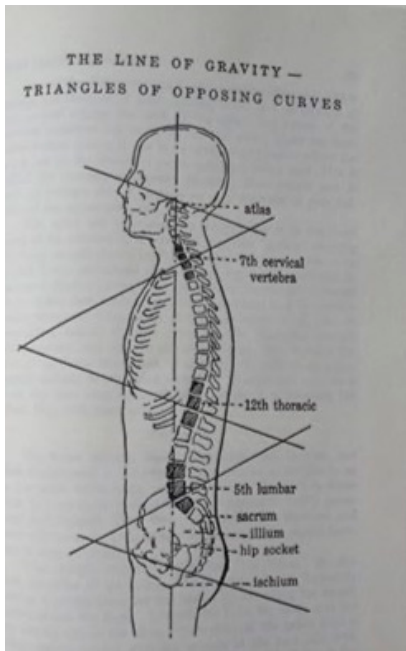
# VAGUS OR WANDERING

THE BRAIN, IN RIGHT PROFILE WITH THE GLOSSOPHARYNGEAL AND VAGUS NERVES AND, TO THE RIGHT, A VIEW OF THE BASE OF THE BRAIN.  
PHOTOLITHOGRAPH, 1940, AFTER A WOODCUT, 1543.

CREDIT: WELLCOME COLLECTION.



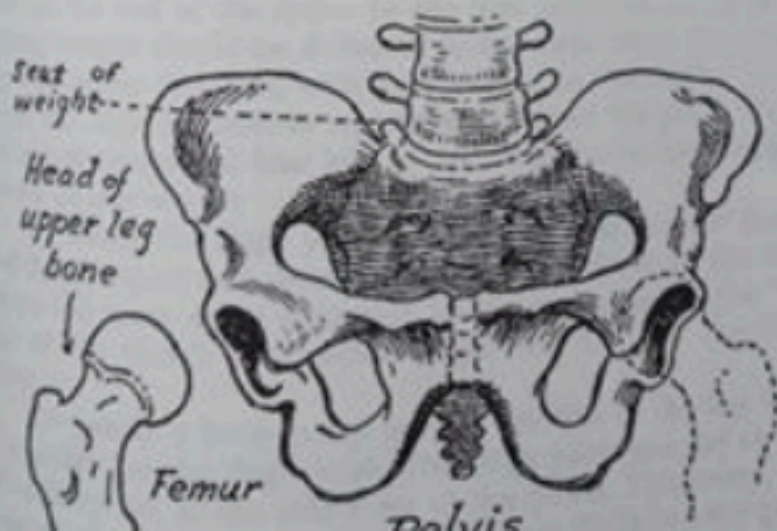
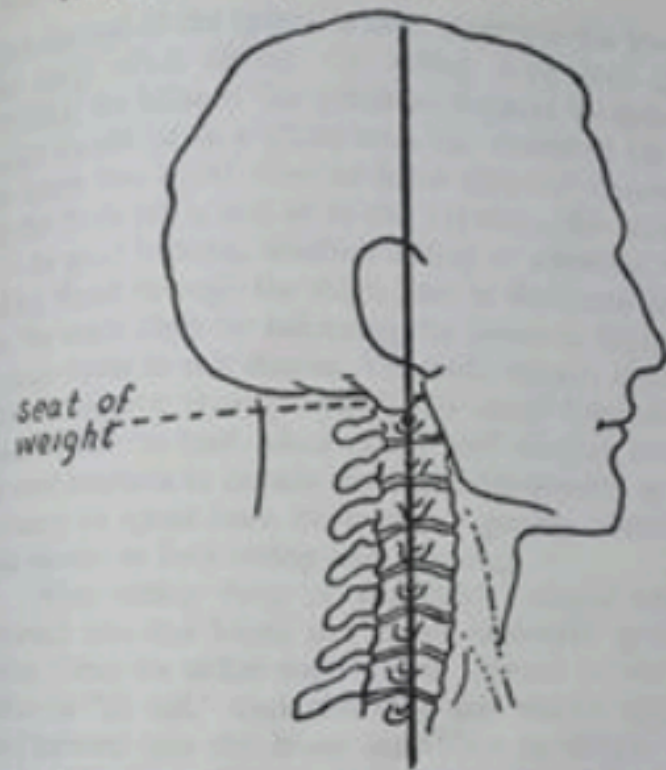
# Skeletal Support for Polyvagal



The seats of weight Mabel Todd

The line of gravity Mabel Todd

Where Body Weight Sits



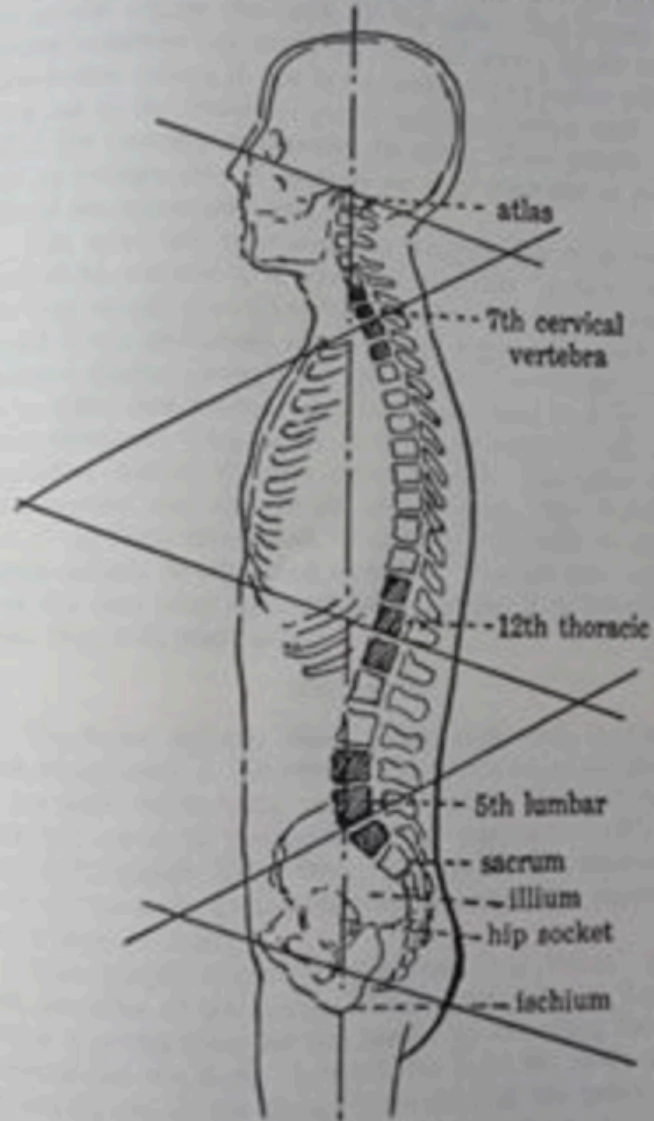
'The seats of weight'  
from *The Hidden You* by  
Mabel Todd, p. 101

Fine Books, Eastford, CT,  
2018 isbn 978 1 68422 249  
0

re-edition from Exposition  
Press, NY, 1953

(appreciation to Stéphanie  
Menasé)

THE LINE OF GRAVITY —  
TRIANGLES OF OPPOSING CURVES



Hoerber

© transfered 1949 to  
Mabel Elsworth Todd

© transfered 1959 to Lulu  
F. Sweigard

(appreciation to  
Stéphanie Menasé)

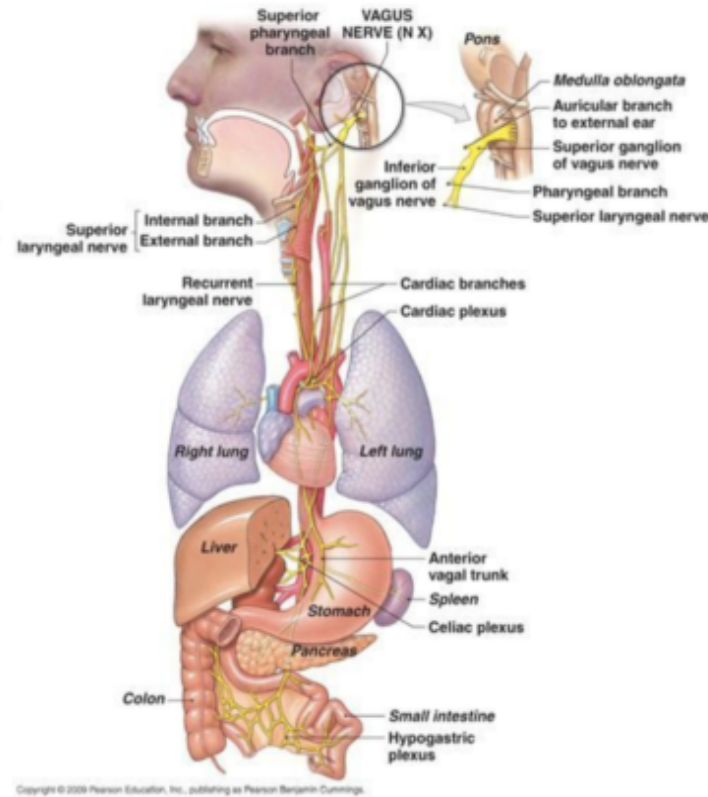


# Anatomy for Polyvagal

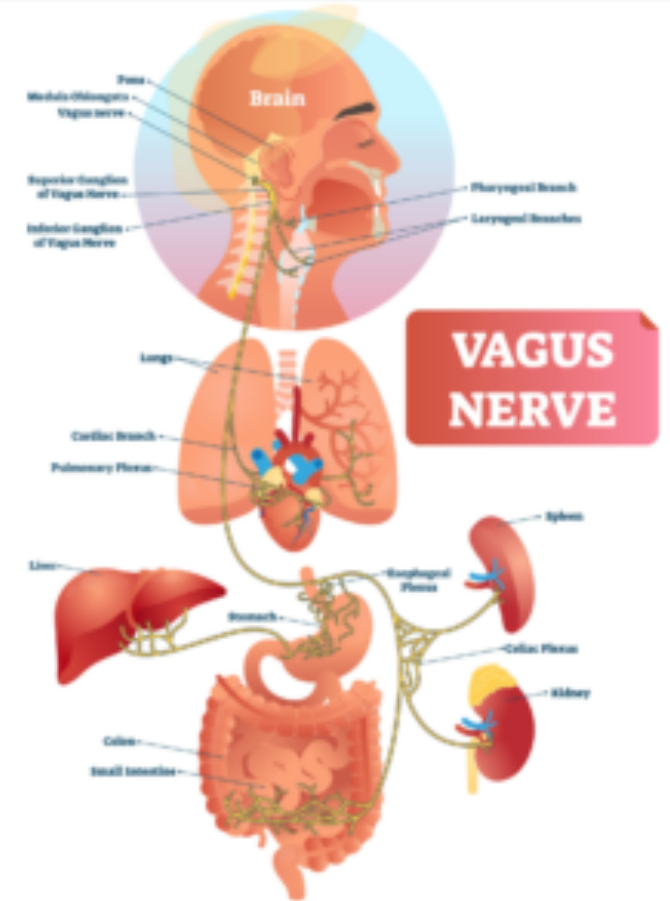
Diagrams showing the various branches of the Vagus Nerve and the organs involved

## Cranial Nerve X-Vagus

The vagus nerve is a critical nerve for supplying parasympathetic information to the visceral organs of the respiratory, digestive and urinary systems. It is important in the control of heart rate, bronchoconstriction & digestive processes.



Wendy M. Rappazzo  
Harford Community College, July 2009



# Practices

Developing Polyvagal Balance

Feldenkrais Method®

<http://feldenkraisinclusioninitiative.org>

A Sounder World with Sounder Sleep System™

Bones for Life® & Solutions for Optimum Mobility

Movement Intelligence

# Practices

## Developing Polyvagal Balance

*The next 2 slides:*

Feldenkrais Method®

## THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD

Beginning as a scientist and martial artist, Moshé Feldenkrais DSc wrote influential books about movement, learning and health. His book *The Elusive Obvious* presents a thorough and accessible explanation of the Feldenkrais Method and, as its title indicates, throws light on the solutions to many of our difficulties that are hidden in plain sight.’

— The Elusive Obvious: The Convergence of Movement, Neuroplasticity, 2019  
by [Moshe Feldenkrais](#) (Author), [Norman Doidge M.D.](#) (Foreword)

From the Amazon notes: <https://www.amazon.ca/Elusive-Obvious-Convergence-Movement-Neuroplasticity/dp/1623173345>

# Feldenkrais® Inclusion Initiative

*Reaching Out to More Communities*

[www.feldenkraisinclusioninitiative.org](http://www.feldenkraisinclusioninitiative.org)

The project focuses on Students who are younger (50 or younger) or more diverse. We welcome you to the many lessons ~ sign up through the [calendar](#) or [website](#) (no cost or pay as you can).



Thank you Anita Bueno  
for this audio lesson to practice!



Thank you Joyce Lu, Ph.D.  
for this video to enjoy!



Bobbie Ueunten is one of the fifteen teachers for our project and her (free or pay as you can) class is on Mon & Wed & Sat [Sign up link](#) ~ Theme: Power of Play!

Bobbie's website: <https://www.s3nse.org/practitioners>

# Practices

## Developing Polyvagal Balance

*The next 2 slides:*

Bones for Life® & Solutions for Optimum

Mobility

*Movement Intelligence*

# Bones for Life®

## & Solutions for Optimum Mobility

Based on Feldenkrais principles as developed by Ruthy Alon, Bones for Life® lessons support physical and emotional regulation, and mental resilience. We provide practical applications to ensure PolyVagal health. The lessons guide you to a greater awareness of your position in space and develop graceful movement within your comfort and safety. Cognition is improved. Your thinking becomes more adaptive to change.

Many Bones for Life® lessons are inspired by the Water Carriers Walk from "When the Moment Sings, The Muse Within 1996"

You may view a segment [here](#) to observe the elements and style that are woven into (BFL®). Enjoy the full documentary film [here](#).





## [More About Bones for Life](#)

### [Information page ~ Bones for Life® Teacher Training – Thinking in Movement Studio](#)

**Moshé Feldenkrais' students created programs inspired by his teaching and grounded in the principles he taught. At Thinking in Movement Studio, we are dedicated to acknowledging Feldenkrais principles in our varied practices and community.**

**Ruthy Alon began her training with Moshé in Tel Aviv, Israel in 1958. She went on to become a Feldenkrais Method® trainer in Europe, America, Australia, and Israel. Here are Ruthy Alon Videos showing her work with Moshé and her development of the Bones for Life® program. In her Ph.D. dissertation, Ruthy Alon poses the question: "How would it be possible to apply the Feldenkrais perspective, which supports the organism in its entirety, to address the specific problem of bone deterioration?" 1 The BFL program applies the precision of the Feldenkrais Method to a concrete challenge for our bones in the 'real-world' vertical plane.**

# Practices

## Developing Polyvagal Balance

*The next 4 slides:*

A Sounder World with Sounder Sleep System™

# Practices

## Developing Polyvagal Balance

*The next 3 slides:*

A Sounder World with Sounder Sleep System™ 15-hour  
workshop & Weekly Practice

18 Lessons from The Insomnia Solution by Michael Krugman ©2005

# Sounder Sleep System™

Based on Feldenkrais principles, Sounder Sleep System cultivates a quiet calm balanced by a syncopation of lively interest. Thus we refine our autonomic nervous system. Fine motor movements are juxtaposed with larger actions. Three daily, three-minute practices, over a three-week period foster new habit patterns. An integration occurs to refine the entire self. A steady connection with our parasympathetic nervous system maintains a sense of calm and leads to more restful sleep. Enhanced awareness of our sympathetic nervous system creates vitality and enthusiasm in daily life.

A Sounder World with Sounder Sleep System™  
15-hour workshop & Weekly Practice

Workshop 7 - 11 am Pacific (Tue - Fri) June 13-16, Jul 11-14,  
Aug 8-11, Sep 12-15, Oct 10-13. Nov 4-17, Dec 12-15, 2023  
Dec 10-12, 2022 (3.45 hours daily) Online Format

- ✧ For Everyone ✧ Refine your patterns of waking and sleeping
- ✧ Mutual support ✧ Collaborations ✧ Balance and Ease ✧
- ✧ Enhance your professional practice as a therapist or teacher
- ✧ Continuing Education Credits (CEC) and Professional Development Hours (PDH)

REGISTRATION WORKSHOPS & PRACTICE

L.E.S.S. LIGHT, EASY, SOFT, SLOW... LESS IS MORE — MICHAEL KRUGMAN

[Sounder Sleep System® Teacher Training with Paris Kern](#)

[Sounder Sleep System™ with Katarina Halm, Thinking in Movement Studio](#)

✧ "Katarina's skills in listening, supporting and encouraging colleagues are a great talent.  
I applaud her dedication to furthering both Feldenkrais® and Sounder Sleep System™

– Paris Kern December 2021

Sounder Sleep System™ Founder: Michael Krugman, M.A., Feldenkrais Teacher; Copyright© Paris Kern, Feldenkrais Trainer  
Invitation developed by Katarina Halm, design by Rosie Casciero 2021.



**The Insomnia Solution:**  
Michael Krugman MA. GCFP  
Founder of the Sounder Sleep System™ © 2005

**INTRODUCTION: WHY AMERICA CAN'T SLEEP .....**

**CHAPTER 1 PROFILES IN SOUNDER SLEEP .....**

**CHAPTER 2 HOW TO USE THIS BOOK .....**

**CHAPTER 3 RELAX YOUR BODY .....**

- \* Relaxing Mini-Move #1: The Pelvic Rock ...
- \* Relaxing Mini-Move #2: Unlocking Your Rib "Cage" ...
- \* Relaxing Mini-Move #3: Lengthening One Side of Your Trunk ...
- \* Relaxing Mini-Move #4: Slouch and Recover ...
- \* Relaxing Mini-Move #5: Painting the Air (Freeing Your Arms for Action) ..
- \* Relaxing Mini-Move #6: To Banish Neck and Shoulder Tension: Hang Loose!

**CHAPTER 4 CALM YOUR MIND .....**

- \* Calming Mini-Move # 1: L.E.S.S. Is More  
(For Deep Relaxation, Breathe Fully Rather than Deeply)
- \* Calming Mini-Move #2: Making Room (For Fuller, Freer Breathing)
- \* Calming Mini-Move #3: Things Are Looking Up!
- \* Calming Mini-Move #4: Main Squeeze
- \* Calming Mini-Move #5: A Twist of the Wrists  
(Movement Meditation for Daytime Relaxation)
- \* Calming Mini-Move #6: Touching Your Heart

**CHAPTER 5 LULL YOURSELF TO SLEEP .....**

- \* Lulling Mini-Move #1: Breath Surfing 1
- \* Lulling Mini-Move #2: Breath Surfing 2 (Going Deeper)
- \* Lulling Mini-Move #3: Rocking the Cradle
- \* Lulling Mini-Move #4: Tongue in Cheek
- \* Lulling Mini-Move #5: The Ziggurat
- \* Lulling Mini-Move #6: Welcoming Sleep with Open Arms (Instead of Pacing the Floor)

**APPENDIX A: FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION .....**

**APPENDIX B: MINI-MOVES IN BRIEF .....**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

## [The Insomnia Solution](#)

*Stay tuned for an upcoming  
audio book  
by Katarina Halm*

# Thinking in Movement\* Studio

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\* “Thinking in Movement” is the title of Chapter 12 in Primacy of Movement (1st edition 1999, expanded 2nd edition 2011) by Maxine Sheets-Johnstone.

# CREDITS

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Sounder Sleep System™ Founder: Michael Krugman, M.A., Feldenkrais Teacher, Copyright© Paris Kern, Feldenkrais Trainer

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