

The Embodied Thriving Self, Lessons + Mussing's Podcast with Corin Hinderegger  
Season 1, Episode 3  
Nervous system states and stories.

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**INTRO:** Hi, Everyone, this is Corin Hinderegger, and you are listening to The Embodied Thriving Self Podcast.

A series where I invite you on an inner and outer journey... to align with your soul, unlearn who you thought you needed to be, and become your most authentic and thriving self.

So you, too, can create the magical ripple effect in your life and business you came here to do.

**Corin:** Hi and Welcome, Today I'd like to touch on the different nervous system states we can experience in life. So you get a little bit of sense of them, and then I will give you some ideas and inspirations on how you can move forward and connect to your natural state of flow more easily.

There are three main states of our nervous system.

The first one is called ventral, meaning our natural state of peace. We experience our natural state of flow, and we trust that everything will always work out. This is the place where we are most authentically ourselves and deeply aligned with our body's compass and our soul. But it is very hard for us to come to this place where we can actually rest, regulate, slow down and be in that moment because through our experiences, triggers, and all that has happened in our lifetime we tend to be stuck in one of the other two states.

One of them is called Sympathetic. There is a lot of energy happening like there is a lot of Oh my God, and I need to get this done, I have to push through, I have to take care of this because no one else can. It's all about do, do, do, and fight or flight... And usually, you'd notice that energy in your body as tension and alertness.

So when we experience that, we tell ourselves a story. For example, we're driving the car, and the person in front of us is driving at the speed limit. We get freaking annoyed with them. Like, why can't they speed up a little bit, or why can't they do this or that? We might even honk at them and speed to take over because we might feel that we are running late. In this case, we're just stuck in our Sympathetic state and feel very, very triggered. There is nothing wrong with this person or what this person is doing, but the sensation we experience and the stories we tell ourselves is that there is something wrong, like I will be late because this person doesn't, you know, speed up or something.

In contrast, if we were in Ventral, the way the person drives in front of us wouldn't affect us. We would mainly tell ourselves things like, "that's nice. Let's cruise a little bit. I will be there

on time. I know everything is going to work out. I don't have to speed." We wouldn't even think about feeling angry with anyone. Our body would feel very different.

So, depending on which state we are stuck in, the story we tell ourselves is completely different.

Being in our ventral state doesn't mean we don't do anything, though. We are still driving that car. We are still working on getting to our goal, but we don't have to do anything extra. We don't have to push ridiculously hard. We don't have to think about things that can go wrong because we know everything is going to work out. So that's the difference. And becoming aware of what state we are stuck in, or which default state we drop into as soon as we feel a hint of stress,

is very helpful because then we can support our body by doing some exercises to ground ourselves or by noticing different sensations in our body to come back into our body and come back into connection.

So we can experience life differently again.

The third state is called Dorsal, and Dorsal is all about immobilization. You're usually in this state when you want to distance yourself from everything; you really withdraw and literally don't want to connect to anyone. You don't want to do anything or only the bare minimum; you might have more depressed sort of thoughts and stories going on, like Why always me? Why is that always happening to me?

Everything is too much; everything is too much effort. I can't do that anymore. So, that's what happens when we feel more in a dorsal state or are stuck in a more dorsal state.

Again, you see how different the stories are in the different states.

And then we have a mix of Sympathetic and Dorsal.

This state is called Freeze. The feeling and story we tell ourselves in this state goes along the lines of:

I need to get this done, but I can't; I really should be there in time, but I can't. This state is often strongly connected to a sense of guilt as we like to get all of the things done but physically do not have the capacity to get them done. Often just the thought alone of having to do one more thing is too much for our body, and it just wants to collapse.

This blended state is usually the state that costs us the most energy as there is a never-ending battle happening within us.

Put your hands together for a moment and start pressing them together. And now, press as hard as you can.

Just notice what happens. Your hands might start to shake slightly as there is so much pressure and nowhere to go. This is sort of what happens within us when we are stuck in freeze.

This is a very common state many of us experience at one time or another in life, especially as entrepreneurs.

No wonder why people experience burnout and chronic fatigue so frequently as well as various immune disorders and sleep issues.

When we are stuck in one of the states for an extended period of time, our immune system dials down as it is experiencing a sense of threat. And from an evolutionary standpoint, it is more important to our inner drivers to stay alert than having a fully functioning immune system and organs that work to generate optimum health. It puts all the energy into scanning our environments for threats instead.

So, becoming aware of where our nervous system is at and supporting it to come into a restful state and regulation and being able to connect more to our ventral self is crucial for so many things in life.

It is crucial for aligning to our soul. Have an optimally functioning immune system and a body that supports us through this lifetime.

It is also crucial for building and holding the capacity to grow as a human being, as a partner, parent, friend, leader, and business owner.

And for being able to hear and trust our own intuition. When we are stuck in a story, our intuition can often not be trusted. The intuition might be on point, but how we interpret it is often not beneficial for us, or it might be spotty.

The other beautiful thing that happens when we become aware and start to take tolerable steps towards a more aligned life and business is that our capacity to receive what is aligned with our true being expands exponentially, and the circumstances, money, and things that are in alignment with our soul can come into our lives in a sustainable and easy way.

So, becoming aware of the default states we experience helps us to do things differently.

To start out with, I invite you to get yourself a notebook or pad and start to note down each evening for a duration of a month how you've experienced your day and what state you believe you have been in.

Keep it nice and short. The simpler, the better.

Below that, you start to note down what has given you energy today and what has taken energy from you.

Again, keep it as simple as possible. Don't take longer than 5-10 minutes. As you start doing this every evening for, I would recommend, about one month; you will most likely start to notice a pattern. That you felt less stuck in your usual default state on the days where you experienced less things that drained your energy.

The other beautiful thing about doing this exercise for a month is you begin to notice what the things are that give you energy. Often it's not just the big things you become aware of, but the small ones too. This provides us with tools that help us to move a little more into regulation when we need it most.

After that month, I invite you to familiarise yourself with the things that give you energy and write them all out on a piece of paper. Hang it somewhere where you can see it regularly, so it is a reminder for yourself to check in at least once a day, and notice if you can do any of them to fill your own cup and connect a little bit more to your state of Ventral, meaning where you are authentically yourself even if it is just for a moment per day. As you do this, you will start to build the capacity to connect to your ventral state more and more.

Because each time you connect to this calm and aligned place within, you are building new neural pathways. A neural pathway is a series of connected nerves that send electrical impulses through your body. The more often you do this exercise, the stronger they become, and it will get easier and easier for you to stay in the ventral state...

Another beautiful thing is that with this list of energy givers and takers, we are also able to support ourselves by regulating us when we have to do a chore that costs us energy.

For example, for me personally, I know loud noise dysregulates me. Having three boys, there is only so much I can do about loud noise.

I am aware that my boys are usually the loudest after I pick them up from school at around 3 pm. The noise lasts for about 40 minutes or so as they are letting go of their energy. To support myself, I have learned that it is important for me to spend some time in nature before they come home. Hugging my horse or going for a walk, or just sitting in the sun for five minutes makes a huge difference to how my body and I experience this intensely loud time. Once they have calmed down, I usually take another few minutes to do something that I know will give me energy. Like doing one of the vagus nerve exercises or sitting in the sun again for a few moments or whatever else fits into my day.

The beauty in knowing this helps me not only to be a calmer mum, it also helps me to show up differently in my business and with my clients as my system is at ease.

We can use this bookmarking, so to speak, for anything that usually drains our energy.

What happens when we do that is that our nervous system learns that the experience that usually costs us so much energy is not that bad. As it no longer keeps us drained. And so, over time, we need to bookmark less and less energy drainers.

To recap, there are three main states we experience in our nervous system.

Ventral is our most authentic and peaceful self.

Sympathetic is when we experience a rush of energy and usually fight or flight. We are pushing through to get things done.

Dorsal is immobilization; everything is too much and feels like a big burden and a grey cloud.

And then we have the mixed state of Freeze. This is where we experience some Sympathetic and some Dorsal. It's mostly connected with a sense of guilt because we have the inner drive to get things done, but we can't as we are too exhausted.

As with everything, the awareness you gained from today's episode is only an awareness and will not create any change in your life if you do not act on it. I invite you to reflect on what tolerable steps might be for you to take to become more aware and more regulated throughout your day. So it becomes easier and easier to show up as your most authentic self and start to thrive in life and business.

**Outro:** As always, thank you so much for spending time with me and listening to The Embodied Thriving Self podcast. I appreciate you and the journey you have been on that led you to this community.

I hope to connect with you again in the next episode. In the meantime, I appreciate your shares and reviews.

Please always remember you are not broken; you are worth it and deserve to align with your soul and Thrive as you create magic in all you touch.