

DR. AIMIE APIGIAN



THE 2 COMPETING SURVIVAL STATES



TRAUMA HEALING
ACCELERATED

SYMPATHETIC

Anxiety Threat Hypervigilance Activated Anger/Aggression Hamster Wheel Restless Insomnia

PARASYMPATHETIC

Social Engagement Secure Curiosity Healthy Present Calm Aliveness Connected Grounded

DORSAL VAGAL FREEZE

Too Much Too Fast Too Little For Too Long

Exhausted Heaviness Chronic Pain What's The Point Depression Conserve Energy Overwhelm

There are three states of the nervous system, 2 of which are survival systems. These states differ in their level of energy and sense of safety. The middle parasympathetic state is the opposite of a survival state! It is where we are fully present, calm and yet very alive, learning, curious, creative and connected. It is where we feel completely safe enough that no insecurities are holding us back and we get to truly thrive without even trying.

However, most of us live in between the sympathetic and freeze state, going back and forth between the two shown the diagram . When one senses a threat, whether real or not, whether physical, emotional or psychological, the first response of our nervous system is to become activated. It goes into the upper zone (Sympathetic), and is hyper-alert. Its role is to determine how big of a threat this is and what needs to be done to make the threat go away and come out on top! The bottom zone is also a survival state. Rather than an active state, it is the shut-down survival state. Rather than the high energy state of the sympathetic state, it is a low energy and even energy-conservation state.

We go into the freeze state when the threat seems so big we can't fight it, or that it has been going on for too long that we can't keep up the fight. We give in and give up. This can feel like an emotional flat line. In fact, it can feel like "I just don't have the energy to care anymore." Many people live in a state of chronic functional freeze state, and no longer experiencing true joy. A person in a chronic functional freeze state may need to create an adrenalin rush to get into the sympathetic and high energy; there is just always a cost to that and the collapse afterwards. Many people are programmed to immediately go into shut down mode after an activation by a threat. This often looks like depression and fatigue. As a person comes out of the giving up state, they go right back into the activation and aggressive state that triggered the overwhelm and shut-down.

Regulation is our ability to manage these different states of our nervous system and bring it back to the healthy middle parasympathetic social engagement zone. Our ability to regulate is programmed from childhood. A true high performer learns to manage his nervous system, gently guiding it back and being able to maintain it in the middle parasympathetic state.

You can use the graph to help you start tracking and understanding your patterns, and how much time you spend in one of the survival states. For more information about the 3 States of the Nervous System: <https://youtu.be/2f2DStYgWBw>

TRAUMA HEALING
ACCELERATED

Your Daily Nervous System Journal

Please use the following graph to map your nervous system. Mark which state your nervous system is in throughout the day (you can do this hourly or at any time interval you choose.) If you would like to make note of anything that comes to your awareness as you map your nervous system, please use the space below the graph to note the time and your observations.

	6am	7am	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm
Sympathetic Anxiety																	
Calm Alive																	
Freeze/ Overwhelm																	

Notes: _____

