

Printable Somatic Healing Cards

**The importance
of giving more time
to your nervous
system response
rather than dismissing
your feelings through
your intellect.**

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NERVOUS SYSTEM RESPONSE

I am in a social situation and I feel frightened and worried and my chest feels tight, my hands are clenched, my stomach is tight, and my breathing is shallow.

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INTELLECT RESPONSE

You are fine and nothing is going to happen. You need to get over your fear and become more social and outgoing.

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NERVOUS SYSTEM RESPONSE

I am feeling alone and sad and do not feel seen or heard when I am around my parents. This makes my chest feel tight, I feel tears in my eyes, my throat tightens, and my shoulders turn inward to protect my heart.

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INTELLECT RESPONSE

My parents had difficult upbringings and they did the best they could.

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NERVOUS SYSTEM RESPONSE

I am angry and frustrated at what was done to me. My muscles are tense, my jaw is clenched, my hands are clenched, I want to scream, and push my hands out with all my energy to create a boundary from this person.

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INTELLECT RESPONSE

I do not want to hurt anyone. My anger makes everything worse and I need to avoid the situation, calm down, and be peaceful.

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A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Rushing toward intellect is a way of coping and suppressing our autonomic response. When I feel angry about being attacked or threatened my intellect swoops in to remind me to not be angry, to ignore the situation, or to avoid my big emotions. We can try to work toward a bottom-up approach to healing. Bottom up meaning first addressing the sensations of our nervous system that are connected to the brain stem (felt sense) and limbic system (emotional and autonomic part of the brain). This being an alternative to the cognitive top-down approach of using our cerebral or cognitive process to deny the response of our nervous system.

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A DIFFERENT APPROACH

In the moment where I feel threatened I can use a bottom-up approach to first feel the response of my anger and threat. I may notice my hands clench, jaw tighten, my shoulders rise up, and my heart tighten and quicken. I can then allow my body to process and release this protective energy. As I stay with the felt sense of my anger I may be able to notice my shoulders drop, my head lift, my breathing slow down, my chest lighten, and my jaw soften. As I settle I may be able to then cognitively remind myself that it is okay, that I am safe now, and that I can talk to the person or address the situation without reacting. From this different approach I am giving time and space to my nervous system response and using my intellect to address the situation through the balance and regulation of my nervous system.

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