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What We'll Do Today


- Apply a trauma-informed lens to recognize personal decision-making patterns
- Cultivate self-evaluation to notice personal decision making styles
- Define and apply broader perspectives how decisions are made

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Breathing For Our Vagus Nerve

- Sit quietly, allow breath to settle into your abdomen
- Inhale through your nose for six counts
- Hold for one count
- Exhale through your nose for eight counts
- Do several rounds of this vagus nerve strengthening breathing to feel calm and present




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Awareness = Agency

“Neuroscience research shows that the only way we can change the way we feel is by becoming aware of our inner experience and learning to befriend what is going inside ourselves.”




Bessel Van der Kolk
Author - The Body Keeps The Score

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Decision Making Styles


- The knee jerk
- The eff u
- The oops, sorry, never mind
- The I’ll please everyone
- The my way or the highway
- The I’ll teach you a lesson
- The sanctimonious sage
- The balanced, present human



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How Do I Know What To Do?



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HEAD AND INTELLECT

- Is useful for communications when we want to appear knowledgeable
- Is our outward face of what we know
- Can overrule other ways of knowing by being “the authority”

Is most helpful when it's integrated with all our knowing



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HEART AND FEELINGS

- Can feel open and expansive or “dangerous”
- Can drive our decisions at times
- Is often connected to our instinctual “guts” feelings but might be hard to differentiate from survival



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GUT AND SURVIVAL INSTINCTS


- Our deepest sense of knowing – **Instinct**
- Instincts can be damaged by trauma and abuse
- Trying to depend only on our guts is a trauma response
- When we can integrate our guts with our intellect and hearts, we feel whole and resilient

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GUT AND BRAIN CONNECTION

- “Enteric brain” has more than 100 million neurotransmitters
- Most of our serotonin is in our guts
- Digestive disturbances are related to what we think and feel
- Stress increases gut issues
- Gut disturbances send signals to brain



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INTEGRATION MAKES US WHOLE

Humans are complicated and we can feel fragmented until we learn how to accept and integrate who we are

“Attention without feeling is only a report.”

Mary Oliver



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Three Centers Meditation


- Sit quietly, breathing slowly into your abdomen and begin gently waving one hand towards the top of your head, pulling in energy to your mind. Do three to five repetitions.
- Next begin the same hand motion towards your heart, pulling in energy for your emotional well being and wisdom. Do three to five repetitions.
- Use the same gentle hand motion to pull energy towards your belly for your intuition and gut instincts. Do three to five repetitions.

Breathe deeply and give thanks for your self care

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HOW KNOWING GETS DAMAGED



- Emotional abuse
- Gaslighting – “That didn’t happen.
I didn’t say that. You didn’t see that.
You imagined it.”
- Sexual trauma
- Racial, gender, cultural violence
when we feel our voices are not heard
- Crushed hope, insufficient support...

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FEELING IS THE GATEWAY TO KNOWING


- Allowing our feelings
taps into our deepest
instincts
- We gather courage and
insight from facing our
fears and therein lies
our knowing and
instinctive ways of living

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Trauma Informs Us

“The essence of trauma is
disconnection from ourselves.
Trauma is not terrible things that
happen from the other side—those
are traumatic. But the trauma is
that very separation from the body
and emotions.”



Gabor Mate

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The Wisdom of Grounding




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Practicing Yes And No

How does Yes or No feel in your body, while also noticing thoughts and emotions?

Practice feeling in the body where Yes resides and what it feels like. Is it an open, expansive feeling? Or a relaxed, soft feeling? Or something different?




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Helping Ourselves Decide

- Breathe, get grounded
- Take your time
- Write it down
- In alignment with my values?
- Who or what is impacted?
- Talk it out
- Plan, breathe




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What If I'm Wrong?

- Why is making a “bad” decision so scary?
- How do we react when things don't work the way we thought they would?
- Why do we feel “safe” when we are “right?”
- Where did we learn these ways of thinking?



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Changing Our Minds

- Is it okay to change your mind about something?
- What happens in your mind and body when you want to do or say something different?




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Trying Is Messy

“Vulnerability is not knowing victory or defeat, it’s understanding the necessity of both; it’s engaging. It’s being all in.”

“Sometimes the bravest and most important thing you can do is just show up.”




Brene Brown

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Alternate Nostril Breathing


- Sit quietly breathing normally
- Use your thumb to close your right nostril and inhale through your left nostril
- Use your pinky to close your left nostril and exhale through your right nostril
- Inhale through right nostril, exhale through left, inhale through left, exhale through right and continue to alternate for five to nine cycles



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Looking And Feeling Confident

- Where does your confidence come from?
- Who told you that you could or couldn't do things in life?



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*With love and thanks
from the MomsRising.org team*



**"DO THE BEST YOU CAN
UNTIL YOU KNOW BETTER.
THEN WHEN YOU KNOW BETTER,
DO BETTER."** - Maya Angelou

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