

# Polyvagal Explorations: Reviewing the Fundamentals

Catch this first of four review episodes in our months of polyvagal explorations. Today we go back to basics and look at the terms hierarchy, neuroception, and co-regulation and what they have come to mean for us.

In this organic series, Gemmotherapy expert and educator Lauren Hubele, Japanese Acupuncturist Maegan Lemp, and the Passionate Polyvagalist Cameron Scott explore the blended use of the Polyvagal Theory, Asian Medicine and Gemmotherapy extracts to restore a sense of safety and connection.

Watch this episode on my YouTube channel [here!](#)

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## Caramelized Shallot Pasta

While I'm trying to fit in before lunch hikes and face meetings until 10 pm I'm on the prowl for quick to the table meals. This recipe will surely find a place in my new menu rotation. We just had it for lunch and I could eat it again tomorrow it was so delish!

### INGREDIENTS

- **¼ cup olive oil**
- **6 large shallots, very thinly sliced**
- **1 red onion, finely chopped**

- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **1 teaspoon red-pepper flakes, plus more to taste**
- **1 teaspoon of smoky paprika**
- **8-12 ounces of finely chopped Baby Bella mushrooms**
- **1 (4.5-ounce) tube or (6-ounce) can of tomato paste (about 1/2 to 3/4 cup)**
- **10 ounces gluten-free spaghetti**
- **1 cup parsley, leaves and tender stems, finely chopped**
- **Flaky sea salt and fresh ground pepper**

1. Heat olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed pan over medium-high heat. Add shallots and red onion, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until the shallots have become totally softened and begin to caramelize showing golden fried edges, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Add red-pepper flakes and chopped mushrooms. You may need to add more oil at this point. Keep heat at medium-high so that mushrooms begin to brown. Add tomato paste and season with salt and pepper and paprika, stirring constantly to prevent any scorching, until the tomato paste has started to cook in the oil a bit, caramelizing at the edges and going from bright red to a deeper brick red color, about 2 minutes. This is an extra step but really brings out the flavors. Set aside while pasta cooks.
3. Before draining pasta add a ladle full or two of the pasta water to the shallot mixture, turning up the heat. Add drained pasta and swirl to coat each piece of pasta with sauce.
4. Toss in chopped parsley, season to taste with salt and pepper and enjoy!

Adapted from Alison Roman's recipe in NYT.

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# A Winter Salad

Doesn't this winter salad make you smile? Every bite of this crunchy dish is full of vitality and joy, exactly what is needed during the long months of winter. You truly don't need a recipe to make it but I will share the ingredients I used and the process. Please allow yourself permission to play with what you include, bringing to life a different salad each time.

## Salad

Red cabbage, chopped finely by hand

Carrots, grated

Kohlrabi, peeled and grated

Apple, a tart yet sweet variety either grated or cut finely in julienne strips

Pumpkin Seeds

Sunflower Seeds

Other ingredients I have used include grated broccoli stems, finely chopped kale stems, diced oranges, beets, hemp seeds, and any toasted and roughly chopped nuts you enjoy.

## Vinaigrette

Blend well with a whisk or shake in a jar with a tight-fitting

lid

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fresh orange juice

2 TBL Apple Cider Vinegar

2 TBL Honey or Maple Syrup

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of Olive Oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Prepare salad ingredients and toss with the vinaigrette. Allow it to sit at room temperature to marinate a bit before serving. This salad keeps very well, up to 3 days even with the dressing. I think it tastes better each day!

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## **Polyvagal Explorations: What will it take to feel safe enough to connect?**

When your autonomic nervous system sends you into a place of a shutdown and disconnect what do you crave? I believe you need reminders that you exist. What those look like for you might be different for me because of our different trauma histories.

That is exactly why an individualized approach to trauma is critical. In this episode, we explore this idea and more diving deeper into discovering pathways to heal complex trauma.

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# Lemony White Bean Soup

Bringing together simple, good quality ingredients makes for kitchen magic. This delicious Lemony White Bean Soup is a stand-out example of that principle.

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large carrots, diced
- 1 bunch sturdy greens, I used cabbage and kale, finely sliced and stems chopped
- 1 can of chopped tomatoes
- 3 tablespoon tomato paste
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon ground cumin, plus more to taste
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon red-pepper flakes, plus more to taste
- 3 shallots, minced
- 1 leek finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 2 veggie broth cubes prepared with boiling water to dissolve
- 2 (15-ounce) cans white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup chopped fresh, soft herbs, such as parsley, mint, dill, basil, tarragon, thyme, chives, or a combination
- salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh lemon juice from 2 lemons (and grated zest for topping)

## PREPARATION

1. Heat a large heavy pot over medium-high for a minute or so to warm it up. Add the oil and heat until it thins out. Add leek, shallots, and carrot, and sauté until soft and brown at the edges, 7 to 10 minutes.
2. While the vegetables cook, rinse the greens and pull the leaves off the stems. Chop stems into small bite-size pieces and cut the leaves into thin strips. Set aside.
3. Once vegetables are ready, stir tomato paste, 3/4 teaspoon cumin and 1/8 teaspoon red-pepper flakes into the pot, and sauté until paste darkens, about 1 minute. Remove this mixture from pot and set aside. Wiping pot clean with a paper towel
4. Adding a splash more oil to the pot, sauté stems and leaves from greens until just barely tender.
5. Combine in leek, shallots, carrots and white beans stirring into the greens.
6. Grate in ginger and cover mixture completely with prepared broth adding additional water if needed.
7. Bring soup to a gentle simmer, cover, and cook for 20-25 minutes. Add lemon, herbs, and salt and pepper to taste.
8. Serve topped with a drizzle of olive oil, grated lemon zest, and more red-pepper flakes, if desired.

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**Explorations of Polyvagal Theory: What are cues of safety for a dorsal vagal**

# state?

Deb Dana shares with us that the dorsal vagal pathway responds to cues of a life-threat, causing us to shut down, become numb, and disconnect from others. But what are the different flavors of dorsal vagal and what does that state ask from us?

Those are the questions I can not stop asking myself and others who share my interest in Polyvagal Theory. Step into the room with Cameron and I as we explore these themes together.

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## **Lablabi–Tunisian Chickpea Soup**

I must admit I was equally skeptical and intrigued by this recipe and danced around it for several days before giving it a go. Worried it would taste like a bowl of warm hummus I had Plan B on the ready, but it was never required. The real problem turned out to be not making enough! Like with many cultural mainstays, it is the bringing together of good quality simple ingredients that make for kitchen magic, and you will soon discover that this soup is no exception.

Just an FYI- This recipe must be started 8 hours in advance

with soaking the chickpeas

## **Ingredients**

FOR THE CRISPY CHICKPEAS:

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cooked chickpeas or 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste

1 teaspoon za'atar, plus more to taste

**FOR THE SOUP:**

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups dried chickpeas, **soaked overnight and drained**

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup plus 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving

2 bay leaves

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste

$\frac{1}{2}$  loaf hearty rustic bread (about 8 ounces – I used this one)

1 cup chopped onion

6 garlic cloves, minced or finely grated ( I used shallots)

1 tablespoon ground cumin, plus more for serving

2 chopped Roma tomatoes

1 tablespoon harissa paste or spice mix plus more for serving ( adjust this according to taste)



3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest, for serving

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped flat-leaf parsley, for serving

Crispy chickpeas:

Layout chickpeas on clean toweling to completely air dry for at least 30 mins.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees

Move chickpeas onto a parchment-covered baking sheet. Splash 2 -3 teaspoons of olive oil and toss well with salt and a sprinkle of za'atar.

Bake 15 mins or until crispy, add more seasoning if desired, and set aside to cool.

At the same time, you can toast the rustic bread until crispy for the soup. Tear in bite sized pieces, and place on a baking sheet for about 10 minutes.

Chickpeas for soup:

In a heavy stockpot or pressure cooker, combine drained soaked chickpeas, 5 cups water, 1 tablespoon olive oil, bay leaves, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt over high heat. Bring to a boil for 2 to 3 minutes, then reduce heat to a simmer, cover, cooking until chickpeas are tender, 30 mins in the pressure cooker, and about 1 to 2 hours in a stockpot.

When the chickpeas for the soup are tender, discard bay leaves. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the chickpeas,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the chickpea cooking liquid, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil to a blender or food processor, and purée until smooth. Set aside.

In a large skillet over medium-high, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil until shimmering. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add garlic or shallots and cook until golden, about 2 minutes. Add the remaining 1 teaspoon salt, 1 tablespoon cumin, and tomatoes and cook, stirring, until fragrant, 1 minute. Add a splash of the chickpea cooking liquid to the pan, and bring to a simmer to deglaze, scraping up the browned bits on the bottom of the pan. Turn off heat.

Combine chickpea purée and onion mixture, remaining cooking liquid along with harissa and lemon juice, and stir well. Add water as needed if the soup seems too thick, and adjust seasonings.

Serve by dividing toasted bread pieces among soup bowls, add soup and garnish with lemon zest, parsley, olive oil, more cumin, and some of the crispy chickpeas. Serve hot, with more harissa on the side.

Enjoy!

Adapted from Melissa Clark NY Cooking

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# **Explorations of Polyvagal Theory: Addressing trauma,**

# can we do better?

Do you or someone you love suffer from the effects of developmental or complex trauma? If so you won't want to miss a minute of this conversation.

Listen in as we make serious inroads into understanding the subtle but significant challenges that disrupt the process of healing trauma. Six months ago we set out to explore what Polyvagal Theory could add to what we already knew about Asian Medicine and Gemmotherapy. We knew for certain that our current tools weren't reaching all the nooks and crannies where trauma likes to hide. But what could we discover by blending all three together? Might we be able to better meet individuals where they are with exactly the energy that would provide the necessary cues of safety? While we don't claim to have all of the answers we are closer than ever before.

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## Sourdough Whole Grain Bread – 2021 Version

I love this recipe because it tastes like bread is meant to taste AND it is free from added starches, dairy products, eggs, and yeast. Although the actual effort that goes into this loaf is minimal the process must begin three days in advance.

## Ingredients

$\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of brown rice sourdough (which will need organic brown rice flour)

525 grams (3 cups) buckwheat groats

175 grams (1 cup) of quinoa or millet

2-4 teaspoons of salt

Filtered water

1 tablespoon of maple syrup or honey (can omit)

25 g hemp seed

25 g chia seed

25 g sesame seed – white or black

50 g ground flax seed

75 g sunflower and pumpkin seeds

OR any combination of nuts and seeds to equal at least 250 grams or 1 cup. I have used up to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of seeds with good results.

## Directions

**Step One** – 5 days prior to baking bread

Make a Brown Rice Sourdough following this or one of the many processes available online. I use only two ingredients: organic find ground brown rice flour and filtered tap water. Store sourdough in a glass lidded jar in fridge.

**Step Two** – Two evenings before finished loaf

Take starter from fridge and feed with organic brown rice flour and filtered tap water.

Place buckwheat groats in large bowl, cover just to the top of the groats with filtered water, check after an hour and add more as it absorbs water quickly.

Place quinoa or millet in smaller bowl and just barely cover with filtered water.

Allow all three items to stay on the counter overnight covered with a tea towel.

### **Step Three** – 12 hours later

Check buckwheat groats for excess water pooling over the surface, if there is drain off just a bit. Use a metal sieve to catch any groats. Pour into high speed blender, blending well into a dough-like very thick pancake batter. Completely drain millet or quinoa and add to mixture in blender. Continue processing until all grains are incorporated into the dough. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sourdough and pulse blender to integrate.

Empty all into large bowl for further fermentation.

### **Step Four** – 24 hours later

Preheat oven to 375 degrees with convection fan if available.

Measure all nuts and seeds. Measure salt (and honey or maple syrup if desired). Fold all into the proofed dough. Allow to rest 30-60 mins.

Oil loaf pan, pour in batter, smoothing top and sprinkling with your choice of nuts or seeds.

### **Step Five** – Bake for 60 minutes.

Check that top has crusted and is not wet. If loaf is well formed, gently remove from pan, return to oven rack or pizza

stone if one is available.

Bake another 30 minutes. Turn oven off and let bread sit in over overnight or at least until completely cooled.

The ability of this bread to keep is completely dependent on local weather conditions. In high humidity it should be stored in the fridge. I prefer to slice the loaf completely once cooled and freeze the individual slices between strips of parchment paper. I remove slices as needed to toast or bring to room temperature.

Enjoy!!

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## **Explorations of Polyvagal Theory: New Meanings for Old Words**

This new year deserves our pausing to consider what in our day to day interactions could benefit from some updating. In today's episode, we consider updates for a few everyday words. Listen in to our conversation as we explore words like vision, invite, and allow and revision them together.

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habitually react.

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# **Exploration of Polyvagal Theory: Offering Live Client Support for Dorsal Vagal States**

You won't want to miss this pilot episode offering live support to Art teacher and mom Ashley Dalme, who is finding the continued challenges of the pandemic weigh her down.

You'll hear our suggestions from the Polyvagal, Asian Medicine and Gemmotherapy lens.

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# Polyvagal Explorations: True Life Holiday Survival Tales

We're back and so excited to share our holiday tales and lessons learned. Pour a cup a tea and come along on our Polyvagal adventure as we out brief together what worked and what didn't this holiday season.

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