

# What Polyvagal Theory, Gemmotherapy, and Activism Have in Common

*“Safety and security don’t just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment.”*

*– Nelson Mandela*

Safety. It is exactly what your emotional core longs for. When you are safe, you can connect. When you connect, you can create. And when you create, you experience freedom to be who you were born to be.

So how do we achieve safety, especially now, in this unprecedented time? I certainly won’t claim to have the answer to that question, but I have been making important connections worth sharing as I strive to take what I know and grow it further.

I know that when something is of great value to my work, it begins to show up in different forms from a variety of sources. That has been my exact experience with Polyvagal theory, the masterful work of renowned neuroscience researcher, Dr. Stephen Porges.

## **What is Polyvagal Theory?**

*“Polyvagal theory offers a way to understand the human autonomic nervous system and directly engage with our habitual patterns of response.”*

This is the definition that Deb Dana, the foremost teacher of Polyvagal theory, shares.

I have found the Polyvagal theory to provide a remarkable lens offering insight into how and why smart, capable people often

find themselves stuck in a loop of making forward strides, becoming overwhelmed and then shutting down. This short video cuts to the core of the theory and will illustrate my point.

While there is certainly much more to this theory to address in future posts, I want you to understand this. A perceived sense of safety is the key to step out of the cycle I described. Achieving that can begin with the use of some certain extracts in microdoses.

### **How Polyvagal theory (PVT) connects with Gemmotherapy**

Over the past two years, I have been framing and reframing the use of microdoses of specific Gemmotherapy extracts in search of a coherent and accessible method for selection. I have looked at extracts through the lens of whether they are stimulating or sedative, what emotion they best address and whether their action on the nervous system is to tonify or harmonize.

While it has all helped me move closer to something useful and applicable, the selection of extract relied on a considerable amount of subjective information. To teach others to make a reliable decision, objective symptoms are needed, and that just may be where the Polyvagal theory is leading me.

Through private tutoring sessions with a colleague of Dana's and discussions with my Gemmotherapy colleagues, I have begun to develop what may be the guideposts I have been in search of all along. The recent pandemic has certainly pushed things along, giving me fertile testing ground for harmonizing jangled nervous systems.

At this point in the development, I am borrowing some PVT language and looking at extracts for the nervous system as either *mobilizers* for the central nervous system or *organizers* for the sympathetic response. The mobilizing extract would be used first thing in the morning to support forward movement, and the organizer would interrupt old patterns of fight or

flight when encountered.

### **And how will this help me be an activist?**

Let's now weave Polyvagal theory and Gemmotherapy's support for the nervous system into the present moment. To speak out against injustice, whether it is in the form of microaggressions or the blatant disregard of lives, requires you to begin from a place of safety. If you have suffered from injustices or any trauma, staying both mobilized and out of fight or flight will be nearly impossible.

This is where Gemmotherapy can come in, because the plant meristem cells in the extracts are actually reminding your autonomic nervous system how it is meant to respond, pretrauma. Combined with therapeutic support, your first steps as an activist, *recognizing there is innocent suffering going on in society, stand up and call it out*, can be successful. You will no longer fall into habitual patterns of response. To do so without experiencing a perceived threat or danger will allow you to call it out again and again without becoming overwhelmed or shutting down. Just think of all the good that could be done.