

WE WERE NEVER MEANT TO HEAL ALONE

Early Edition

Community, the Horse & the Healing Nervous System

THE
*Worthy
Cowgirl*

Your nervous system was not designed for solitude. It was built — from birth — to calibrate safety in the presence of safe others. Below are the key principles and practices that will guide our work together.

KEY POINTS

01 **Feeling Safe Happens in Connection**

Stephen Porges teaches that there is a part of our nervous system that helps us feel calm, safe, and open. This calm state is most easily triggered when we are around someone who is steady and safe. Not when we are alone. Not when we push through. We feel safe when we are with safe people. And when we feel safe, healing can begin.

02 **We Calm Down Together**

Allan Schore explains that we learn to handle big feelings through relationships. As babies, we could not calm ourselves. Someone had to hold us, soothe us, and help us settle. That is called co-regulation — one nervous system helping another feel safe. We do not heal by shutting people out. We heal by learning how to feel safe with others.

03 **Being Truly Seen Changes the Brain**

When someone really sees you — not judging you, not trying to fix you, just listening and caring — your brain shifts. Your body relaxes. Your mind gets clearer. You feel more like yourself. Every time you are truly seen, your brain learns that connection can be safe. Being seen is not just nice. It actually changes your brain.

04 **Independence and Clinging Are Both Survival**

If a safe connection was not steady when you were young, your body found ways to survive. Some people decided, “I don’t need anyone.” Others decided: “I have to hold on tight.” Both are ways of protecting yourself. But real safety is in the middle — where you can stand strong on your own and still let others in. A healthy community helps your nervous system learn this balance.

05 **Your Horse Has Been Healing You All Along**

Horses can feel what is happening inside you. They do not respond to fake calm. They respond to what is real. When you breathe, and your horse relaxes... when you soften, and your horse softens... That is co-regulation. Every quiet moment in the barn has been teaching your body what safety feels like. Your horse has been helping your nervous system heal all along.

06 **Repair Builds Trust**

A healthy community does not mean there is never conflict. People misunderstand each other. Mistakes happen. But when someone says, “I’m sorry,” and works to make it right, your nervous system learns something powerful: Connection can survive hard moments. For many people, this kind of repair is deeply healing. It teaches the body that relationships can be safe — even when they are not perfect.

WHAT SAFE COMMUNITY GIVES THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Co-regulation — real-time nervous system calibration
- Witnessing — being seen without being managed
- Mirroring — borrowing courage until you grow your own
- Rupture & repair — learning connection survives imperfection
- Expansion of what is neurologically possible
- The regulated middle ground between armoring and clinging

SIGNS YOU MAY BE CARRYING A COMMUNITY WOUND

- Dreading or avoiding group spaces
- Performing wellness rather than feeling it
- Exhaustion from self-sufficiency
- Fear that your realness will be too much
- Clinging or over-attaching in relationships
- Feeling most safe with your horse — alone

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MOVEMENT PRACTICE — RELEASING THE WEIGHT OF PAST COMMUNITY WOUNDS

For the woman ready to begin letting go — gently, at your own pace. Allow 15–20 minutes. If movement is not accessible today, skip to the Visual Exploration below.

01 Arriving (2–3 min)

Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees soft. Begin to slowly sway side to side. Let your arms be heavy and loose. Notice the ground beneath you. Internal invitation: I do not have to earn this ground. It holds me simply because I am here.

02 Carrying (4–5 min)

Walk slowly through your space. Bring to mind a community wound — a time you were excluded, betrayed, or asked to be something you were not. Notice where this lives in the body. Exaggerate that posture slightly. Walk as if carrying its weight. Internal invitation: I see how long I have been carrying this. I am not broken for having carried it.

03 Shaking Loose (3–4 min)

Stand with feet hip-width apart. Gently shake your hands — like water off your fingertips. Let the shaking travel up into your wrists, arms, shoulders, torso, hips, and legs. Let sound emerge if it wants to. Internal invitation: I am not shaking this off because it didn't matter. I am shaking loose what no longer needs to live in my body.

04 Opening (3–4 min)

Bring the shaking slowly to stillness. Breathe. Begin to move your arms slowly outward and upward — tracing the arc of something opening. Let your ribcage follow. Repeat 5–7 times. Internal invitation: The new community does not have to repeat old wounds.

05 Settling (2–3 min)

Come to the seat. Place both hands over your heart. Say aloud or silently: "I have been hurt. I have adapted to survive. And I am learning — slowly, gently — that a safe community exists. I do not have to heal alone."

VISUAL EXPLORATION — THE RIVER AND THE STONE

For those not comfortable with movement, or as a complement to the practice above. Allow 10–15 minutes in a quiet space. Eyes closed or softly downcast.

01 Arrive at the River

Take three slow breaths. Imagine standing at the edge of a clear river. The light is warm. The banks are soft. Nothing is required of you here. You are simply allowed to be present.

02 Find the Stone

Look down at your hands. In your palms rests a stone — heavy, older than it looks. This stone carries the weight of a past community wound. Notice its texture, its temperature, its weight. Feel how long you have been holding it.

03 Be Witnessed

Become aware that someone stands beside you — at whatever distance feels safe. A trusted person, a wise presence, an ancestor. They see you holding the stone. They do not try to take it or explain it. They simply witness you with unhurried compassion.

04 Offer the Stone

When you are ready, crouch at the water's edge. Open your hands and let the current take the stone at its own pace. This is not erasing what happened. It is releasing the charge — the decision to no longer organize your life around the anticipation of that wound repeating.

05 Receive

The presence beside you extends their hands — offering something small and luminous. A seed. A warmth. The possibility of a community that is still becoming. Bring it to your heart and hold it gently. Say: "I am open — at the pace my nervous system can hold — to the community that is safe and real."

"Your horse already knows you are worthy. The work is learning to believe it yourself — and letting a community of women witness you in that becoming."