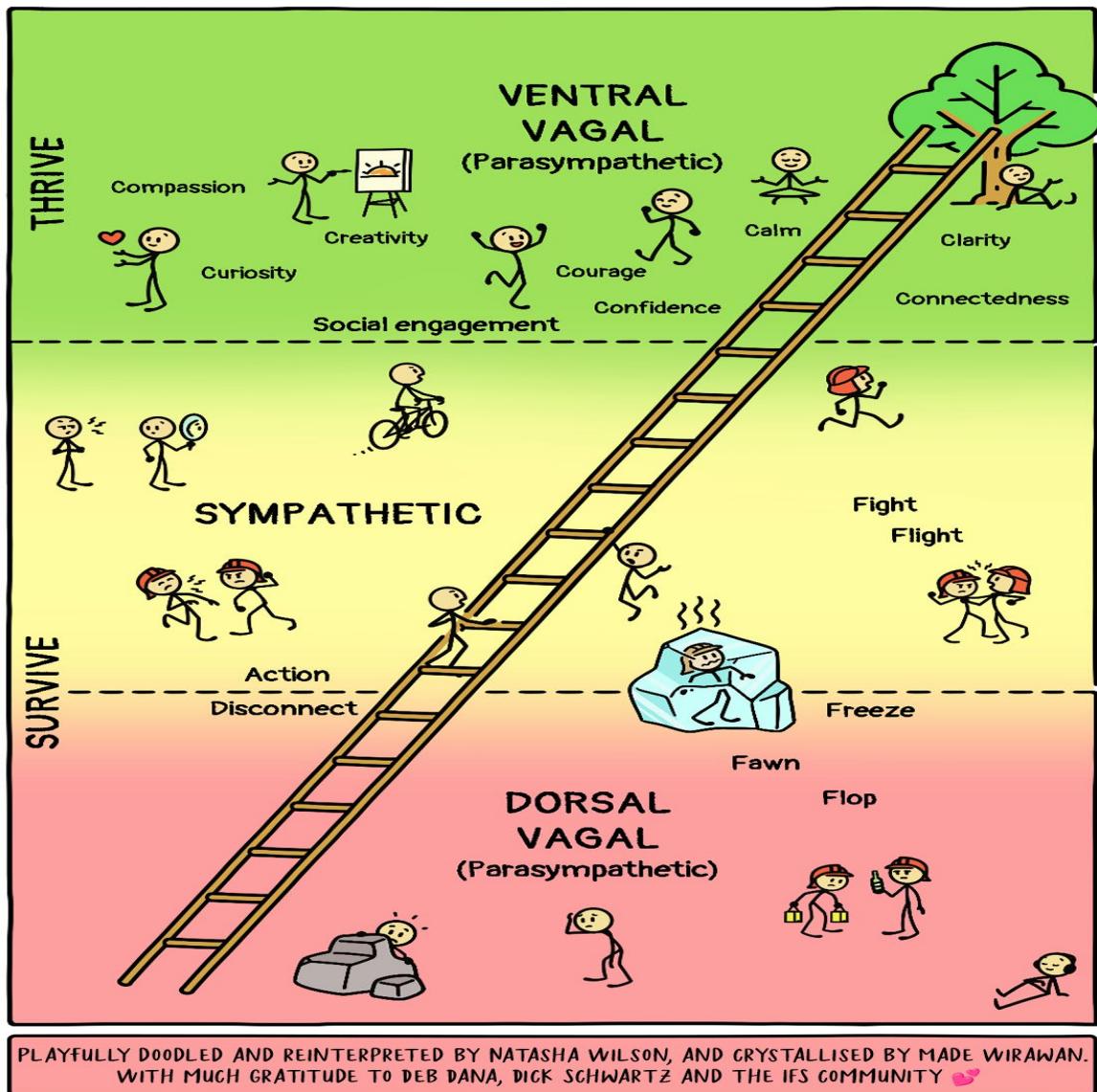


REGULATED AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM
THRIVE - SURVIVE MECHANISMS



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Our ANS is our survival mechanism – it is unconscious and automatic. It has both a thrive response (ventral vagal) and a survival response (Sympathetic and Dorsal vagal). Polyvagal theory explains very well, functional changes that occur because of trauma and has evidence of improvement from using this approach. Currently science is inconclusive about the theory related to the structural aspects of the vagus nerve ie dorsal/ventral.

We are in the early stages of understanding the anatomical pathways associated with the impact of trauma.

Mind-body connection was functionally recognized ahead of finding evidence of nerve endings in the spleen which helped the field of psychoneuroimmunology in the 80s and 90s.

Fibromyalgia developed from being considered psychosomatic to recognizing the powerful impact of early, complex, trauma that is unconscious and results in overactivation of the nervous system.

Normally, we move up and down this ladder – these are normal ways of unconsciously & automatically dealing with stressors.

Brief activation of the Survival ANS is normal and healthy and happens when a threat is perceived.

Ex. Being late for work – once we arrive safely, it deactivates.

Ex – When working long hours, you feel like a robot, not stopping to manage bodily needs – eating, drinking, using the BR – example of **Functional Freezing – and feel very disconnected**. After a good night's sleep, you can feel more regulated and grounded in your body.

The ventral vagal system (Relax/Engage) leads us to seek safety through connection

The sympathetic NS (flight/fight) seeks safety through action

The Dorsal vagal system (freeze/collapse) seeks safety through disconnection.

When the Survival ANS is chronically activated from lack of safety and support after traumatic experiences – we develop chronic symptoms.

Ex -symptoms of anxiety and depression develop when we spend too much time being driven by our SNS (anxiety) and our dorsal vagal system (depression).

The less time we spend in this survival system, the less anxiety and depressive symptoms we experience.

By understanding this trauma informed model, you can better understand your own reactions, and help yourself, your friends and family.