

Reparenting

Your Body

Because what happened early did not just shape your mind — it shaped your nervous system

Long before a child has language for what is happening, the body is keeping a careful record. Heart rate, breathing pattern, muscle tone, sleep rhythm, and stress chemistry all learn from the earliest environment. Reparenting the body is the work of teaching that nervous system, gently, that it is safe now.

How Early Experience Lives in the Body

Bessel van der Kolk's well-known phrase — the body keeps the score — captures decades of trauma research. When a child grows up scanning for danger, the autonomic nervous system gets very good at vigilance. Stress hormones run higher. Sleep is lighter. The body becomes a sensitive instrument, beautifully adapted for surviving an unpredictable environment.

Stephen Porges' polyvagal work adds another layer: human bodies regulate themselves through connection. Early caregivers are supposed to be the first co-regulators, lending their calm to the child until the child can borrow it for themselves. When that co-regulation is inconsistent, the body can grow into adulthood not yet knowing what “regulated” feels like from the inside.

The reparenting frame: the body did not malfunction. It adapted. The work now is not to fight the adaptation, but to update it — to give the nervous system new, repeated experiences of safety, rhythm, and care.

Your body is not the problem to be fixed. It is the patient witness that has been waiting for you to come home to it.

Signs Your Body May Be Asking for Reparenting

- 01 Chronic tension or pain.** — Tightness in the jaw, neck, shoulders, gut, or pelvic floor that resists explanation by injury or posture alone.
- 02 Trouble settling into rest.** — Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or feeling restored — even when the schedule allows for it.
- 03 Dysregulated relationship with food.** — Eating to soothe, forgetting to eat, swinging between restriction and overconsumption.
- 04 Hypervigilance and easy startle.** — A body that scans rooms for exits, jumps at sudden sounds, or struggles to feel at ease in stillness.
- 05 Disconnection from sensation.** — Trouble naming what you feel in your body. Numbness. Going “up into the head” as a default.
- 06 Exhaustion that sleep does not fix.** — A bone-deep tiredness shaped by years of running on stress chemistry rather than restoration.

What Body-Based Reparenting Begins to Heal

- **Nervous system regulation** — a wider window in which you can feel without flooding or shutting down.
- **Restorative sleep and rhythm** — the body remembers how to descend into rest, not just collapse into it.
- **Reduced reactivity** — more space between trigger and response, more choice in how you meet the moment.
- **A felt sense of safety** — not just a thought that you are safe, but a body that quietly agrees.
- **Reconnection with sensation** — hunger, fullness, fatigue, pleasure, intuition all becoming legible again.

Your body has been carrying you all this time. It is allowed to be cared for now.