



Conscious Life presents

TRAUMA SUPER CONFERENCE

Can you biohack trauma healing?

Guest: Irene Lyon

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[00:00:10] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone, to this interview where I'm super excited to be talking with my friend Irene Lyon.

We're going to be exploring, I think, some really important pieces. This is particularly for those of you that have been on a trauma healing journey and been struggling, we're going to talk about things like why you can't biohack trauma healing and why real commitment to the healing journey is so important.

We'll talk about why a one size fits all approach doesn't work and also about some of the key principles within the therapeutic relationship working with a practitioner.

To give you a little bit of Irene's background, Irene Lyon, MSC and Nervous System Expert teaches people around the world how to work with the nervous system to transform trauma, heal body and mind, and live full creative lives.

To date, her online programs and classes have reached over nine and a half thousand people in 90 countries. Irene has a Master's degree in Biomedical and Health Science and also has a knack for making complex information easy for all of us to understand and apply to our lives.

She has extensively studied and practices the work of Dr Moshé Feldenkrais, Peter Levine, Founder of Somatic Experiencing, Kathy Kain, Founder of Somatic Practice and Irene spends her free time eating delicious food, hiking in the mountains, or walking along the Pacific Ocean in her hometown of Vancouver, British Columbia.

So firstly, Irene, welcome. I'm so happy to be having this conversation together.

Irene Lyon

Thank you Alex. We've done this a few times, so we're pros.

Alex Howard

We always have fun as well.

[00:01:56] Irene Lyon

We do.

Alex Howard

So I'm really excited about this interview because I think you and I have done a series of interviews in the past around some of the key principles of your work and I really encourage people to check those out and we'll talk about your resources at the end.

But for this interview, it feels like a bit of a meta position in some ways. Yeah, like some of the different perspectives and themes perhaps that have got some traction and how to make sense of some of that.

So I want to start a little bit with one of the things that seems to happen is complex, sophisticated, nuanced ideas start to get simplified and that's great, but they sometimes get simplified down to perspectives that almost trivialize those things.

And one of the things that's got a lot of traction in recent years is the idea of kind of biohacking, that we can find shortcuts and we can find simple ways to kind of get the minimum effective dose and do our trauma healing in sort of shortcuts.

And I'd love to get your thoughts and your perspectives around that.

Irene Lyon

Yeah, well, I've done quite a few pieces actually on biohacking, so for homework, people can go and look at those afterwards, but like long pieces.

So the biohack thing is interesting. I wish I could trace back the origins of where that occurred. I don't know if it was Dave Asprey or who knows, but there are certain parts of health and wellness and I came from a fitness and nutrition background and BioMed science.

So I know that certain things are hackable and I'll give some examples in a second. But when it comes to the nervous system, in my opinion, in my professional experience, you can't biohack raising a child.

Alex Howard

If you figure it out let me know though.

Irene Lyon

Please, let's write a book and make trillions. But if we really all jokes put aside, really come into our bodies and think of the development of a human from day one, you have to be with it, you have to listen.

You as a parent we now know needs to be as regulated and as calm and as caring and as nurturing as possible through our own bodies and you can't say to crying baby whom you're still

understanding the signals, I need you to take a long four second inhale pause for 7 seconds and exhale for eight, which is a common breathwork practice.

[00:04:39]

A they're not going to understand you and B they won't have the skill to do that and C it isn't going to the root of why they're upset, why they're crying, you have to figure that out intuitively as the caregiver or mother or father.

And so if we just look at that example alone, you cannot biohack teaching self regulation. It needs to be in this co-regulation dance with another human and then eventually building up their capacity as they get older to be alone.

All the things that we know children or humans need to become full functioning, responsible, caring, empathetic, mannered adults, all that sort of stuff with creativity and all those things I think everyone can agree that can't be biohacked.

So when it comes to the nervous system and let's just say little person didn't get that good nurture attunement, all the things that I know you've talked to many experts about so we won't go down that rabbit hole.

When someone hasn't gotten that and they're in their 40s or 30s or 20s or 70s and they're like wow, my nervous system dysregulation is causing these chronic problems, anxiety, depression, autoimmune social anxiety, OCD, all the things.

Of course they want to fix it yesterday and there is an allure to try to hack to make it faster, kind of like you might pop some antibiotics if you had a true infection, like a real infection that needed, like abscess kind of infection.

You would take those for ten days, seven days depending on the strength of the antibiotic, and then you would stop taking them, it would actually work.

But even then you have to recover the gut biome and all these things. So because and I'm going more meta here we've been brought into this world of medicine and health and healing, where you go to the doctor, you go to the therapist, and you're given something, you're given a tool, you're given a technique.

There's this thinking that we can parallel that to restoring full regulation to the nervous system when it never had regulation. In my opinion that's a mistake.

Now, it doesn't mean that you might not use some breathwork some hydrotherapy, some breath, some calming practices, movement, qigong, tai chi, all the things, but when it comes to restoring and providing resilience back to the nervous system, we got to go back.

It's not about reparenting to me, I don't love that word. It's about reestablishing a better relationship as an adult with ourselves and the environment and learning about our stress physiology, something you and I have talked about before.

[00:07:29]

Because if we can't master that then we're not providing full self regulation to that mature human so we could try to biohack it, but to me it's like why not master our physiology and our mind body environment connection so that we don't have to throw the kitchen sink at our system and wondering what's working?

So that's one part of biohack and then the other is I have some peers and colleagues and I know, for instance, you interviewed Carrie Bennett a little while ago for the sleep conference, her work in the circadian biology world, to me those are biohacks that really work well.

Go outside, put your feet on the ground, earth, grounding. Get some sun into your eyes or light into your eyes to set your hormones for the morning, watch the sun set. Those are biohacks that work and we know that and so I'm not against the biohack for certain things, but for this thing again, I come back to the baby. You couldn't biohack raising a child. That makes sense.

Alex Howard

Totally. I found myself wondering as you were speaking, that where the place of wanting to rush trauma healing comes from because in some ways it's like this thing doesn't really matter so I'm just going to do it as quickly as I can to try and get to something that matters more.

And somehow that in itself almost feels like it's borne out of a trauma response.

Irene Lyon

That's a good way of looking at it. I think one of the reasons maybe that there is this desire to just fix the trauma quickly is, and I'm speculating here is most people know they have some trauma or dysregulation because that information is starting to seep out, thank goodness.

But there isn't a deeper understanding of how deep that rabbit hole really goes. It isn't maybe just that one scary event or that one abuse or that one natural disaster, it is the entire rubric of how you were raised.

And it's in your bones, it's in your posture, it's in how you listen, it's in how your eyes work and it changes based on circumstance. It's intra individual as well as inter individual and so I think that that desire to try to do the quick fix is warranted and valid.

I understand that having worked with the amount of people I have over the years, man, there's something so powerful when you go back to the basics and you build foundation, because rather than giving people like, I'm going to use a totally strange example.

I can count from one to ten in German and I can convince someone that I speak full Deutsche.

Alex Howard

Sounds like my guitar playing Irene, I can do you an impression for a couple of minutes.

[00:10:39] Irene Lyon

Yeah, like eins, zwei, drei, I can do it and oh, you speak German? No, that's my ability to pronounce and know a certain set of numbers.

But man, if you put me somewhere and I had to order a meal without an English menu, I'd be screwed and so what I find is happening, and again, I generalize, is a lot of people are getting some good practices on board, whatever they might be, but they're not integrating it into their physiology in a holistic way.

And so they have a trick or a tool and yes that might work, but I've spoken to students, they're like and then I tried that on this day and it didn't work. And then the person, if they had, let's say a lot of early shame and trouble learning, they then spiral into, well, I must be stupid, broken, I'm never going to get any better.

Because the thing that worked the other day, it's not working today and if you don't understand why that might not be working, you lose people. And so for me, I always say this work of restoring regulation as adults is like learning a second language as an adult.

You cannot do it by just knowing how to count from one to ten. You need to practice, you need to immerse, you need to have different teachers, you have to be put in different situations, different stress levels.

And when you get that, you become solely fluent. But also, as you may know, if you have or haven't learned another language as an adult, if you don't practice it, out the window.

And so that's the other thing is we've, I think, been raised as a culture of interested humans on health and healing to think it's dosed like exercise, like, again, exercise physiology background and I'm sure you do your, your share of exercise.

You wouldn't keep lifting weights 24/7. You do it maybe three to four times a week, if you're lucky, maybe twice, maybe once, but at least you do it in a dose.

When it comes to this regulation, you don't just have your baby and choose, okay, I'm going to do regulation with them for this hour and this hour and on Saturday. You would never do that.

It's this constant tending and nurturing of that human and so the biohack puts into this world of trauma healing that if you just do it in little doses, that's all you need.

And I say that might be a good start but then how can you really infuse that learning as a lifestyle because essentially when you do, the sparks and the capacity just grow so much quicker and stronger.

Alex Howard

Yes. It also strikes me that in a sense, the biohacking is trying to do something to get rid of trauma as opposed to being with an experience that actually has shaped us, obviously in ways we don't want.

[00:13:51]

But also there is potential for want of better words, lessons or post traumatic growth being the sort of academic term for it. But the ways it shapes us that we wouldn't change and somehow if we're just trying to biohack our way out we're also robbing ourselves with the chance to have that right.

Irene Lyon

Yes. And there has been a big push towards trauma release and I know there's certain camps that it's almost become a showmanship on social media.

I do not agree with that. Having worked with people and myself who have done massive releases so cathartic that you think someone's, an animal is dying.

And I'm sure you've experienced this with people and that's very sacred in my opinion but it's also just purely biological and there's something odd about when you popularize that and film it.

It's like the quantum lens. The observer comes in and it shifts the dynamic if you know that reference and so when you mentioned here, it's like we're trying to get rid of something, the trauma.

Again, I go back to my work with my students and clients in my courses. Not once do we ask people what their traumas are ever.

And it isn't until a little later on that I make that mention and people go, woah you're right.

If they want to share in our forums where they're asking questions, they might say, I had a car accident, I had this abuse, of course they can share but I am not saying I want you to document all the bad things that happen to you.

Those will naturally appear as they need to. But it comes back to this thesis that I have, which is when you really provide a human with the education. Because I do think having the education is absolutely important in our higher brain world.

You provide them with the tools to reconnect to the body, the environment, all the things that I've learned through my Peter Levine days and Kathy Kain days and all my Feldonkrais days.

When you build them up as a stronger, robust, resilient human, these traumas, they just kind of slip out like carbonation out of a drink.

Sometimes they're coming up faster and other times they're just kind of pooping out and you don't even know they're happening. So, yeah, there is this push to try to release it and I don't know if you've ever asked Peter about his thoughts on trauma release, but maybe you should.

Because the interesting thing is I just remember him just, I've never seen him not answer a question and shake his head and go no.

[00:16:48] Alex Howard

That's interesting, I'm filming in a couple of weeks, I'm gonna ask him.

Irene Lyon

And to be fair, I think that it is important to understand that a human might have a full on deactivation of a stored traumatic procedural memory which is releasing a fight, flight or freeze response.

That is true, but there's something inorganic when you try to enforce it to happen and I can't think of a good example right now other than to say you need the whole picture, you have to address the whole system.

And if your goal is let's get a shaking response out and what if that person's trauma is actually more early and developmental and pre verbal and has nothing to do with needing to shake or run, but it's deep intense terror, which is often the case with early trauma.

No shaking response in the world is going to help that individual heal and restore regulation.

Alex Howard

I also think that often, of course, part of our trauma is feeling coerced or manipulated or controlled by other people and I think the worst thing that practitioners can do is try and drive outcomes in clients without actually responding to what's there.

Irene Lyon

That's a huge topic. Yes, I think that let's say as a client, if I came and saw you and I had the hypersensitivity of someone who had severe early trauma, if you even have the thought in your mind that you're going to try to get me to release something, I will instantly hate you and I won't know why.

But I'll sense that energy of this person is trying to manipulate me has nothing to do with male or female, it's just this person is trying to get me to do something that is not what I want to do.

And again this comes back to education, if the person doesn't understand this, they might think that they're being a mean person because they have this aversion to their new therapist.

But then the therapist might not understand this level of cellular unsafety and they're there because the person has paid them \$250 or pounds to do a session, they need to get their money's worth.

So I also think that the model of private session leaves a lot to be desired in terms of sometimes that model isn't going to work when you're trying to make something happen in an hour.

I'm sure you've come across that in your practice because you want the person to grow capacity and yes, eventually release these traumas but it isn't on a timeline that you can predict.

[00:19:36] Alex Howard

Yeah, well, I think Irene, you raise a bunch of interesting points and I think one that I particularly want to dig on, which is what it means when something doesn't work.

So let's take that example of doing a one on one session with a practitioner and particularly maybe it's set up. You go and see this practitioner to get this trauma release and it doesn't happen.

So then say I'm the client, I walk away from that. I've got to make sense of that experience. So why hasn't it happened for me? Is it my fault as the client? Am I just too broken or am I too difficult or too resistant or whatever it may be?

Is it the practitioner being unskillful or is it the wrong methodology? And I always think the worst possible outcome is the client walks away thinking it's them because now they're worse off than they were at the start, right? That was a statement more than a question I think, wasn't it?

Irene Lyon

That was a statement because this Alex, is one of the reasons I stopped private practice. It was very clear that the level of foundation that people needed to get to that trust in their body to just track sensation without fearing it, to release a procedural traumatic memory.

It was taking me in this context of working years to build that safety, that regulation, that somatic capacity to feel, it just wasn't time effective.

There were some folks and now that I'm starting to train other people I can work with someone in a 15 minute chunk and stuff happens really fast.

But these are people that have been studying their nervous system and somatic capacity building through my methods for some five years and so they're just like they are speaking the language, if we use that metaphor and they just needed a little tweak to move something out.

Someone who comes off the street, Alex, who doesn't even understand that we could say the matrix that we're living in the conditioning, the social conditioning, the fact that maybe they've never expressed true anger in their life or true joy or that they live in a constant pattern of toxic shame and their organs, their spine, is seized in this protection.

If they have no awareness of that it's going to be really hard in even three months to move something deep from their childhood.

Now it can happen but that person has to take it on like a university degree and in this day and age where people have families and lives and jobs and all the things like they don't have a lot of time in the day to study and to lay on the floor or sit and reconnect in the ways that we would teach them in this work.

So is it the fault of those two people or the methodology? I think it's even above that. It's a lack of refinement around how we look at how messed up if I just use that as a general term many of us are and I say that with humor.

[00:23:06]

It's like we really, most don't realize how much they have stored and how much freeze, functional freeze, I think we've maybe talked about that we really are living in to live in this industrialized, very technocratic world that's been domesticated and like that's a big thing for someone to really grok and understand when all they want to do is get rid of their chronic pain.

Well, actually we can do some soothing, we can do some gentle work to just free up some energy, maybe work with the fascia, the sound, some stuff.

But what happens after that if that person doesn't have the insight for how to integrate that? I mean, there's so many potentialities of how it doesn't always work in that one off situation.

Alex Howard

Yeah, well, I think also something you're pointing to is the importance of working with things in different ways and at different levels.

Because I think one of my kind of disappointments and frustrations perhaps of the social, the Instagramization of trauma healing, for example, is nuanced and complex things being refined to single statements that by definition to be catchy and to sort of work on an instagram kind of carousel or whatever needs to be oversimplified.

And then people often walk away with this kind of one size fits or this is the thing that needs to happen, which normally is just the thing for the person writing the post. They then made this assumption it's a thing for everyone else.

So yeah, how do people navigate this kind of one size fits all? People have a piece of the jigsaw and then make a claim that it's the jigsaw.

Irene Lyon

I think we need to teach people that that's not enough. As someone who is on social media for my work and business, it's tough for me because I do want to make things simple and I am good at making complex things simple.

But then I think one of the more common things I find is we have been so obsessed with the quick fix of something flash, something interesting. It pops a stimulation into the brain.

But then there isn't this deep desire to educate and study and master, which I think being someone who loved academic learning, I didn't love being in academia, but I love being a student in academia.

Most haven't been taught that skill. Most hated school. They couldn't wait to get out of high school and elementary school and so the social media is very, it's like flipping through a magazine that's colorful at the doctor's office. Like I find, not that I sit at a doctor's office, but you're on a plane and you flip through, you're not looking at anything.

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It's just like a weird habit that we have or you're standing in line at the grocery store. Oh, interesting. I don't care about Vogue, but let's look at it as I'm waiting here. But now people look at their phones and so to replace deep again, going back to the baby, that learning of how to be with your body and how to learn self regulation, that ain't happening through an Instagram feed unless someone is really smart at applying one thing and then working on it for an entire week.

And I'm going to bet that not many people do that, maybe there's someone out there, let me know if you're doing that.

But there is something dangerous about the quick fix educational pieces because I will say a lot of it is half accurate. And that's a problem when someone is trying to understand how their system works.

Alex Howard

Well, it's also that thing of blindly following someone else's truth or a predefined idea versus actually listening to how does this land in my experience, right?

And of course what a skillful therapist is doing is constantly responding to how their work is landing with a client to help the client find what's actually true for them.

And if we're doing that work with ourselves, then we need to make sure that we're not negating our experience for someone else's and so I guess I'm curious as to how much in your experience people can do in isolation on their own and how much they need groups or one on one or programs.

How do you see and of course everyone's different, that's kind of part of the point here. How do you see that coming together in the most generally fruitful ways?

Irene Lyon

I think a lot can be actually done alone and there are exceptions. There are some folk that come into my world where I now am online with programs and their early trauma and their level of fear is so high that it's terrifying to even consider connecting with the body alone.

I would say that that's less common because we're attracting folk, at least in my world, who are online and are potentially on their own or with a few people in their living environment.

But what's interesting is that let's just use that early trauma example. A lot of those individuals, they had traumas and insecure attachments and misattunements in relationship, usually with their primary caregivers parents.

The last thing that that person needs from my experience and my colleagues' experience is to sit across from someone and be with another human.

[00:29:30]

Now, some might say that to heal trauma you need to be in that ventral vagal relationship. And yes, that is the goal. That's like the ability to order food in another language fluently.

But again, if you are terrified of food and you're terrified of restaurants, you would never put your client Alex in a restaurant and force them to eat food.

So what's interesting is about when it comes to learning about the nervous system, trauma, healing the body, all the things that I do it actually can be very safe for someone in the comfort of their own home, where they do know it is safe in that moment to press play and to listen to something, to learn, to pause after five minutes.

The amount of people I have heard who go to classes, whether it's yoga or meditation or fitness where they're afraid of stopping because they don't want to cause a scene or they're feeling a shaking response or tears and they hold it in because they don't want to be seen or they don't want to disrupt or I paid for the class, I better finish it.

Again, I saw this when I was teaching groups. It's like I tried to say, if you need to get up or sit against the wall or walk around, please do. Just don't do everything you need to do to disrupt the class, but do what you need to do to take care of yourself.

I say that to say there is this, I think, education that people have to have that it's okay to do some healing on your own and there's often a saying that I hear sometimes that says you have to heal in relationship, right?

Nothing wrong with that off face value. But again, if our relationships were the cause of our trauma, we might need to first build that relationship with us, like personal relationship, but also a relationship with the environment.

I think this is where more eastern practices that connect to the earth, that recognize the elements, water, earth, sun, fire, all those things are really important and spirituality for some people, source, God, Allah, whatever it is, connecting to an outside relationship that isn't a human, that historically might have hurt them.

So, so much can be done in isolation, but you're with yourself and that's the part that I think is interesting to cultivate. And then there's ways of being in a relationship with strangers, in fun ways.

I always say to my students, like, you have to go buy groceries or something like that. Or you get your coffee or go get a coffee, or go get a cup of tea, even though you drink your tea at home and feel what it's like to say hello to the cashier, feel what it's like to nod to maybe the person that opens the door for you, or open the door for someone that is sparking up the ventral vagal in a way that is more safe than I have to find a therapist to sit across from and painfully have them see me. Because that might be just way too much when there has been a lot of early trauma. I hope that answers that question.

Alex Howard

It does and I really like the point you're making, which is that it's not one size fits all and even it's not therapy fits all, right?

[00:33:16]

And in many ways it strikes me that sometimes the most healing thing we can do is really listen to what we need and honor it.

And even if that may be not having a therapist or that may be not doing group work or we need to do that thing, but it needs to feel safe even if it's not always going to feel comfortable.

Irene Lyon

Well, that's interesting because one thing that people, so we'll go back, the person that didn't have a good upbringing, they have no map in their physiology or cells for safety.

And so it actually is, again this is from my learnings through Kathy Kain and Steve Terrell, we won't find safety maybe for years when working with someone one on one, we're working towards that.

So there's this thought that I have to feel safe with the therapist or the person has to, and that might not happen for a very long time.

The key is do you trust the process and do you like the person? Is there an interest? Like Alex, he kind of looks cool. He's got books in his background and, you know, he's not wearing a tie, that's cool.

Alex Howard

You know, he hasn't read all the books, just to be clear.

Irene Lyon

Yeah, you shouldn't have said that, so oh, he's honest. He just told me he doesn't read all the books, right?

I mean, as simple as that is, that little exchange we just had for someone who is terrified as humans, that's a tick of, okay, I kind of like this guy.

I think I might be able to let him see me be a little uncomfortable. I think I might be able to tell him that I hate all humans, and I don't think he's going to think I'm crazy and so there are ways to work with someone who, let's say, has this deep level of fear of other humans.

But again, my analogies always come out. If you've ever taken in an animal that's been abused, a rescue animal, dog, usually it's dogs. You don't just cuddle them the first night that they come in.

They're kind of a little not sure, they flinch. You have to demonstrate that you're safe, that you're not going to do anything to hurt them and you might raise your arm to stretch and they'll flinch because that's how they were hit by their previous owners.

And so you have to be very attuned to how this, let's say individual who's terrified of the world and all people responds and acknowledge, yeah, I see it.

[00:36:02]

And what's one thing that we can tune into right now that maybe is less bad as opposed to what's safe in your life? Because someone's going to be like and they literally will not have a thing that's safe.

So even the languaging has to be very non assumptive. Like, let's find something that's less bad.

Alex Howard

Yeah, I really like that and again, what I think is also really important and what you're saying is it's that meeting of someone where they are.

Again, it's that thing of does the client have to meet the therapist or does the therapist meet the client? And I think that's often a really difficult thing where the client doesn't have to take too many steps towards a therapist and then they're suddenly out of their own comfort zone in a way that's not helpful.

Yeah, I'm mindful of time but I think it would be helpful to bring this back to some of the key principles in some ways.

We've been talking about the different pitfalls and the different sorts of ways that are not so helpful.

So I feel like to kind of bring this to completion, it would be helpful to talk a bit about what are some of the fundamentals in terms of practices or aspects that people are likely to find are going to be important as part of their trauma healing journey.

Irene Lyon

So again like you said, there's no one size fits all. But again, from experience, there's sort of a handful of things that I often say are a good place to start.

The first is education and this is clear to me. We need to know how our physiology works and not just in a simple, oh, there's sympathetic, there's parasympathetic, like the deep branches of how things work and how things have maybe been on too long or turned off for too long.

That's number one, right? And so that's a big part of my teachings and then the next couple of things are not in order because it depends on the person, but the basic, I call them nervous system health basics that I would teach in a general class where I know I may never see someone ever again.

To keep it safer is orienting, following impulse, noticing breath, not changing it, connecting to the environment and then really, the fifth is education.

[00:38:36]

So again, if we were brought up in a world where it was safe on the not safe on the outside, two things happen. One of two things. We either are hypervigilant with the outside world and we're defensively orienting and looking for threat constantly.

And you'll see this in people's eyes and their vigilance, or the opposite. I'm not looking at anything, I'm tunnel visioned because everything out there was bad and scary so I'm just going to be in my bubble like this.

And so that element of orienting and connecting with the world, whether it's nature, people, the things around you, is pivotal.

And in speaking with folks who have done years of breathwork, years of meditation, the moment they push play on a simple orienting exercise, they'll feel anxiety.

They'll feel the stress response, not because what I'm saying is triggering, but because they've actually never been guided to something so simple and connected to the environment that is taking their body essentially out of it and just letting the focus become more vast.

Following impulse, this comes back to the baby, right? Babies, they just let out whatever needs to be let out and then they learn self regulation based on how the caregiver connects, soothes, gives them food, shelter, whatever it might be, safety.

And so I say to folks, as odd as this is, can you really listen to your biological impulses? Can you follow your science, not what people are telling you to follow?

So are you hungry? Are you thirsty? Do you need to go to the bathroom? Do you need to put something on because you're shivering? Are you too warm? So again, you've raised little ones. That's all you do with them for the first little while. It's bloody boring, but that's what they need.

Alex Howard

I'm glad you said it.

Irene Lyon

It's this slog of the same thing, but that builds their capacity to know someone is there for me and oh, if I feel a little hot, I make this sound and I instantly get help cooling down or hunger is this sound.

So let's again just say you didn't get that as a baby. You can do that as an adult. And I mean, you know that so many people have trouble with eating, knowing when to eat, knowing when not to eat, when to rest, all these things.

So tuning into that biology, because that connects to our autonomic nervous system, because the autonomic nervous system governs that. It's like a reverse engineering of that.

[00:41:23]

So following impulse, it's not about impulses that are addictive and harmful, it's about biological impulses and people will often find, Alex, that they actually might not even know how to listen because they've overridden their impulses because of all the things that we've taught kids and hold it.

I'm hungry, no, you're not. It's like maybe she is hungry. Dinners soon or no, dinners in 5 hours. Well, I can't wait for that long, right? So we have these ways that we see that we were often taken out of our impulse and also our creativity.

Again, kids need to play, they need to exert, they need to show their healthy aggression and so many of us were squashed with our expressive capacities and so one thing too of those impulses is do you have a desire to say no?

Do you have a desire to say I don't want to do that. We're filming this before for the holidays of 2022. How many people are going to Christmas dinners loathing and hating and waiting for the.. Why are you doing that? You're an adult.

I said this to someone the other day, she's so stressed out. It was a vlog I did, I'm like, you're an adult, you can actually say, no, I'm not coming. It's not about disconnecting from your family. It's choosing a different pattern, right?

So the impulses can really trickle out and then breath, I mentioned, rather than changing breath to soothe, which some people might need to do if they don't have the capacity to be with intense sensation, but noticing the breath and letting the breath do what it wants.

Speaking of Instagram, if you have time to say this, I was listening to someone pretty prominent the other day who was promoting something and they said when you feel that flinch, just take a deep breath and move that flinch away and I was like, no, that flinch is a survival response.

Maybe feel how the breath tightens, feel the fear, process it and of course that's a bit more advanced. But if you're getting a natural survival response coming out of your body, you want to go into that and be with it.

And then feel how the breath can reestablish, reset on its own and then connecting with the environment. That is as simple Alex as can you feel the chair under you? Your arms on the table? And that tethering is a word Peter would often use to the present moment because so many of our deep traumatic experiences took us out of the present moment.

Whether it was a near death thing, a medical trauma, I think I'm going to die because someone's attacking me, natural disaster.

Most people, again, I generalize, don't even know that there's this earth under them that can support them and it doesn't ask for anything in return.

So orienting, education, following impulse, following breath, connecting with the environment and then, believe it or not folks, those all can be done at the same time.

[00:44:49]

And so someone might say that's impossible, I say no, it's actually quite possible. It's that language, right? Like when you speak a language fluently, it isn't just one word, it's all the words strung together with your voice, with the interaction, shifting the tone and so that's what we're trying to accomplish, at least in the work I do with my students. We want not just that, but all the other elements that we teach in this kind of organic whole.

Alex Howard

Fantastic. Well, that leads me very neatly to my last question, which is Irene, for people that want to find out more about you and your work, where's the best place to go and what's some of what they can find?

Irene Lyon

Yeah, just my name irenelyon.com with a Y, no S. And there is everything from my credentials, my full bio, my vlogs, ebooks, downloads galore.

Do not be overwhelmed, depending on when this goes out, we may have a new page that is kind of a new here page.

But really the big pieces are the courses, the online paid courses where a person learns the depth and the deepness of the theory and then what I call the neurosensory practices to connect with not just the nervous system and not just the brain pieces of fight flight, but the organs, the joints, the diaphragms, the movement.

I bring my movement background into it and then of course how all that connects with the environment. So they're not unidimensional in that there's so many layers that we're building into it really from a developmental point of view as well.

So we get into the spinal rolling and movements and that, that I brought in through my Feldenkrais days. So it's hitting all the right spots Alex.

Alex Howard

That's fantastic. I mean, I always enjoy our conversations. I think this was a particularly rich one. So thank you so much.

Irene Lyon

You are welcome.