



INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

Week 12 Transcript: Containment

Today, we are going to talk about containment, and take a more expanded look at how to increase our capacity to hold the full spectrum of emotion by continuing our exploration of increasing our windows of tolerance.

More than anything else, I hear others express their desire to be more present in their lives. We're aware that something is taking us out of the present moment, but not sure what it is and how to get back.

If we put new tools in our tool boxes, but too quickly lose our ability to access them in the moment, these resources can't support us when we need them most. Increased containment allows us to stay connected to our internal resources in a moment of feeling triggered or hooked by a challenging experience.

We have more space around it to watch it happen. We have more time around it to steer our response in a different direction. We have more compassion to offer ourselves for having the hooked in experience in the first place. And we recover more quickly - we're able to bounce back.

Remember when we talked about self-regulation at the beginning of this course? Well, that's exactly what you guys have been developing each week through your action guides and Pause & Pivot practice. You've been slowly, and deliberately, increasing your window of tolerance.

Dr. Dan Siegel talks about integration using the metaphor of a river. On one side of the river is chaos and on the other side is rigidity. When integrated, we're in the flow of the river that has a sense of harmony. It's flexible, adaptive, coherent, energized and stable.

This is a really simple way to check in with yourself to notice when you are outside your window of tolerance. Are you noticing rigidity? Not just in your body, but in your thinking or behavior? Are you noticing chaos? Do things feel anxious and overwhelming? These are cues that you have been hooked in and pushed outside of this window.



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What do we do when we find ourselves beyond-tolerance? Find your feet, find your breath. Go back to your practice of Pause. This will help you self-regulate your nervous system so you can get that tool box back in a place you can use it.

A healthy nervous system has a natural movement of expansion and contraction. It follows this pattern of expanding and contracting, expanding and contracting. Too much expansion can create a state of chaos and too much contraction leads to rigidity.

One thing to keep in mind, that can create a problem for us, is we often want to go from a small comfort zone to living wild and free, but we edge out. We move so far outside our window of tolerance that we clamp down even tighter and experience a collapse.

We have to be mindful of our edges, and intentionally expand just a little bit beyond our capacities. Then, we want to allow for a contraction so that we can integrate our experience. After that, we can practice increasing our containment a little bit more.

Before I understood this natural process, I really struggled with the aftermath of an expansive experience. For example, I would spend 4 days leading a women's retreat where I was increasing my window of tolerance. I was very open, holding a lot for the women and their process, as well as my own.

I was just outside my comfort zone, taking risks and being courageous. I was crossing new edges in my leadership, co-leadership, facilitation and in personal ways, as well. When I came home I would begin to contract. I thought I was back-tracking. Was any of the new ground I had gained real? Maybe I was faking it? Maybe I'm a fraud?

I became rigid and somewhat collapsed as I misunderstood and judged my experience. Now that I understand the healthy movement of the nervous system, I allow for this natural process. After an expansive experience, or intentionally crossing an edge into something new and different, I welcome the internal contraction.



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For me, it looks like needing space to be quiet, to not be “on” and retreat a little to recharge. Then, I get ready to move beyond these edges and increase my containment even more.

Let’s stay connected as we all put these new concepts into practice and download the action guide to support your process this week. We’re going to play with finding the edges of our containment and see if we can increase our window of tolerance a bit. Please share what you’re learning with us on our group page.