

# The Body Keeps the Score

Tuesday, February 20, 2024  
9:42 PM

## 5 March 2024

**Introductions** - Hello everyone, thank you for signing up for this discussion of The Body Keeps the Score, which will run for the next 10 weeks.

**Inspiration for this group:** One of the common issues for transitioning military and 1st responders when they leave that world behind is the loss of a sense of comradery and community of the people who "get us" especially when it comes to sensitive topics like trauma. Typically, we will not open up to those who cannot relate to our experiences. This book has a special place in my heart because it has helped me to understand the Why behind some of the issues/areas I struggle with and more importantly, what things can help me get past these stuck points, so I finally feel like I have a map and compass and can navigate to a better place. Better late than never!

**Purpose for this group:** Learn about the way trauma effects the mind and body and how to get to a better place; learn from each other and most importantly: build connections and friendships and help one another along the path of life.

### In order to facilitate connection:

**Sign in Roster:** One of the benefits of a group like this is connecting with others. I reflect back on church services I have attended where I leave at the end, still not knowing anyone and feeling just as isolated as when I went it. My hope is that this will result in some connections outside of these meetings and to that end, if you are ok with it, I will email a list of everyone's contact information out. However, I am also very cognizant that some folks aren't comfortable with this, so if you would rather not share your information, please circle NO and I'll leave you off. You'll only get updates from me or Virginia to inform/remind you of changes to the schedule, et.

**Signal Chat** - we have created a chat group for those in this group using Signal. Signal is a private and secure messaging app and allows us to set up a group chat to discuss the book further. If you would like to be part of it, please install Signal on your phone/desktop and message me or Virginia and we will add you to the group - it's also a great way to link up with others and have side conversations if someone's comments resonate with you.

**Introductions:** Let's go around and please introduce yourself: Name, military/other background, why signed up, what do you hope to gain/take away from this.

### Group ground rules:

- **Read the assignment** - otherwise we will have nothing to discuss!
- **Arrive on time**
- **Turn off ringers/limit phone use to limit distractions**
- **Respect:** Everyone's perspective is welcome, treat each other with respect and courtesy.

- **Step into the Arena:** This material may be very challenging for some depending upon life experiences. If you find yourself being flooded, by all means take a break, breath and allow yourself to feel what you are feeling (Controlled/tactical breathing is proven to regulate the Central Nervous System).

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cravings/202211/how-your-breathing-patterns-affect-your-brain>

- **Observe time limit:** This material is very emotionally/intellectually evocative and can lead to some desire to share personal experiences (which is welcome if there is time - or continue to do so afterwards). Clean up the area before leaving (Trash/chairs)

### **Book Intro:**

#### **The Body Keeps the Score, by Bessel Van Der Kolk**

The Body Keeps the Score is the inspiring story of how a group of therapists and scientists— together with their courageous and memorable patients—has struggled to integrate recent advances in brain science, attachment research, and body awareness into treatments that can free trauma survivors from the tyranny of the past.

New insights into our survival instincts explain why traumatized people experience incomprehensible anxiety and numbing and intolerable rage, and how trauma affects their capacity to concentrate, to remember, to form trusting relationships, and even to feel at home in their own bodies. Having lost the sense of control of themselves and frustrated by failed therapies, they often fear that they are damaged beyond repair.

The title underscores the book's central idea: Exposure to the abuse and violence fosters the development of a hyperactive alarm system and molds a body that gets stuck in fight/flight, and freeze. Trauma interferes with the brain circuits that involve focusing, flexibility, and being able to stay in emotional control. A constant sense of danger and helplessness promotes the continuous secretion of stress hormones, which wreaks havoc with the immune system and the functioning of the body's organs. Only making it safe for trauma victims to inhabit their bodies, and to tolerate feeling what they feel, and knowing what they know, can lead to lasting healing. This may involve a range of therapeutic interventions (one size never fits all), including various forms of trauma processing, neurofeedback, theater, meditation, play, and yoga.

From <<https://www.besselvanderkolk.com/resources/the-body-keeps-the-score>>

**Question to bring to the group:** What was the most meaningful "aha" revelation you learned each chapter that really spoke to you and why was it impactful?

### **Schedule: 5 March - 3 June 2024**

**11 March: Part 1 The Rediscover of Trauma**

- 1: Lessons from Vietnam Veterans
- 2: Revolutions in Understanding Mind and Brain
- 3: Looking into the Brain and Neuroscience Revolution

**18 March: Part II: This Is Your Brain on Trauma**

- 4: Running for Your Life, the Anatomy of Survival
- 5: Body-Brain Connections

**25 March: Part II Continued**

- 6: Losing your Body, Losing Your Self

**1-15 April: No meeting - Mollie/Pat/Marcia in Okinawa but please feel free to share thoughts over Signal, we will have connectivity while in Japan**

**22 April: Part III: The Minds of Children**

- 7: Getting on the Same Wavelength
- 8: Trapped in Relationships, the Cost of Abuse and Neglect

**29 April: Part III Continued**

- 9: What's Love Got to do with it?
- 10: Developmental Trauma, the Hidden Epidemic

**6 May: Part IV The Imprint of Trauma**

- 11: Uncovering Secrets, the Problem of Traumatic Memory
- 12: The Unbearable Heaviness of Remembering

**13 May: Part V Paths to Recovery**

- 13: Healing From Trauma: Owning Your Self
- 14: Language: Miracle and Tyranny

**20 May: Part V Continued**

- 15: Letting Go of the Past: EMDR
- 16: Learning to Inhabit Your Body: Yoga

**27 May: Part V Continued**

- 17: Putting the Pieces Together: Self Leadership
- 18: Filling In the Holes: Creating Structures

**3 June: Part V Continued**

- 19: Applied Neuroscience: Rewiring the Fear Driven Mind with Brain/Computer Interface Technology
  - 20: Finding Your Voice: Communal Rhythms and Theater
- Epilogue

