



Alistair Appletom - Polyvagal tuning



Alistair Appletom is a meditation teacher, broadcaster and psychotherapist who was inspired by Stephen Porges' polyvagal theory. Appletom describes polyvagal tuning as a somatic and embodied way to achieve inner peace; it is a way to bring down problematic defenses that often get stuck in the body and warm up the pro social system.

TOP EMBODIMENT TIP: The ventral vagal state is the desired state for the human body to be in, in order to feel safe. Polyvagal tuning is an avenue to achieve this desired state.

Polyvagal Theory

- Scraps the dualistic idea that the parasympathetic system is the “good” and “relaxed” system, with the sympathetic system being the “bad” and “alert” system. The reality, as according to Porges, is much more nuanced, complex and subtle than this.
- Vagus nerve has evolved significantly over evolutionary time by splitting into three branches; the dorsal, spinal ventral. The most evolutionary recent branch, the ventral, is myelinated and joins the eyes, ears, heart, lungs and throat and according to Porges evolved to support us as social beings.
- The ventral state is the state of “peace” and safety. Appletom asks, “How can we cultivate and feel this ventral state?”

Polyvagal Tuning - Cultivating and feeling the ventral state

- It is recommended to do the practice 2-3 times a week, to make it part of your routine. It is done lying down.
- It begins with vagal breathing, long gentle in breaths followed by loud, vocal, longer exhalations.
- Tension is released through the back to the earth.
- Appletom describes the practice in detail, followed by a 15min guided practice.

The power of the social group

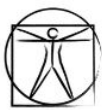
- We allow ourselves as humans to be anatomically vulnerable in the stomach region because we have protection from the group. It is not the skeleton that protects the body, but the community.
- Intimacy is the opposite of fight, flight or freeze.

Metabolizing emotions

- Polyvagal tuning is very effective against anxiety. High states of cortisol and adrenaline can be metabolized to bring the body into the ventral vagal state which is characterized by oxytocin and dopamine and better feeling chemicals.

Resources

- ❖ **Website:** mind-springs.org **Email:** mail@mind-springs.org
- ❖ **Social:** [Mindsprings Meditation](#). [@mindsprings](#)
- ❖ **References:** The practice can be downloaded <https://mind-springs.org/podcasts/polyvagal-tuning/>



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