



## Ruth Culver: The Survive/Thrive Spiral - Navigating Trauma, Parts & the Nervous System



Ruth specialises in using Internal Family Systems (IFS) Therapy, informed with somatic & creative techniques, to help clients recover from anxiety, stress, phobias, insomnia, unwanted habits, pain & trauma and facilitates IFS Constellations. Explore a way to regain balance after experiencing overwhelm and trauma in the mind and the body.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Curiosity! Turn towards your feelings with curiosity. That changes everything.

### The Survive/Thrive Spiral model: Putting the Polyvagal theory alongside the Internal Family System theory

- **I CAN**: The Ventral Vagal corresponds with flow in the body and mind, self/co-regulating, seeking safety through connection. This state is calm, relaxed and soft.
- **I MUST**: When the nervous system perceives a threat the sympathetic nervous system activates the body for taking action: fight, or flee, seeking safety through action, disconnecting from social engagement.
- **I CAN'T**: When activating the body is not enough to neutralise the threat, the dorsal vagal kicks in with the freeze/collapse response, shutting down the system, seeking safety through disconnecting completely.

#### Access to the Autonomic Nervous System: **The Breath**

- Increasing the IN-breath in case of being stuck in the 'I CAN'T' state, brings more energy and lightness to the system.
- Extend the OUT-breath in case of being stuck in the 'I MUST' state, to come back down into a more calm state.

#### **Trauma:** The effect of what happened

- Exile parts are formed, storing overwhelming feelings like rage, terror, fear, grief, shame and hopelessness, as emotions and/or in the tissue of our bodies.
- Exile parts try to surface, so the stored feelings can be processed, but the protective parts prevent them to do so, using either active strategies in I MUST, or dissociative strategies in I CAN'T.

### Resilience: Being our Self

- Resilience is the ability to move fluidly up and down the Survive/Thrive Spiral, without getting stuck and to return to our calm state easily.
- Underneath the blur of the parts, the Self is the state of I AM. The seeds of self are calmness, caring, giving clarity, creativity, courage, connection, curiosity and compassion.

#### Resources

Website: <a href="https://calmheart.co.uk/">https://calmheart.co.uk/</a>





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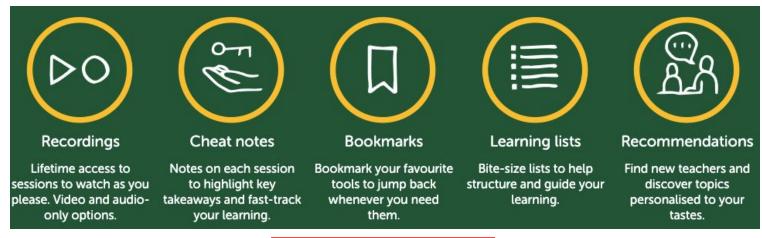
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